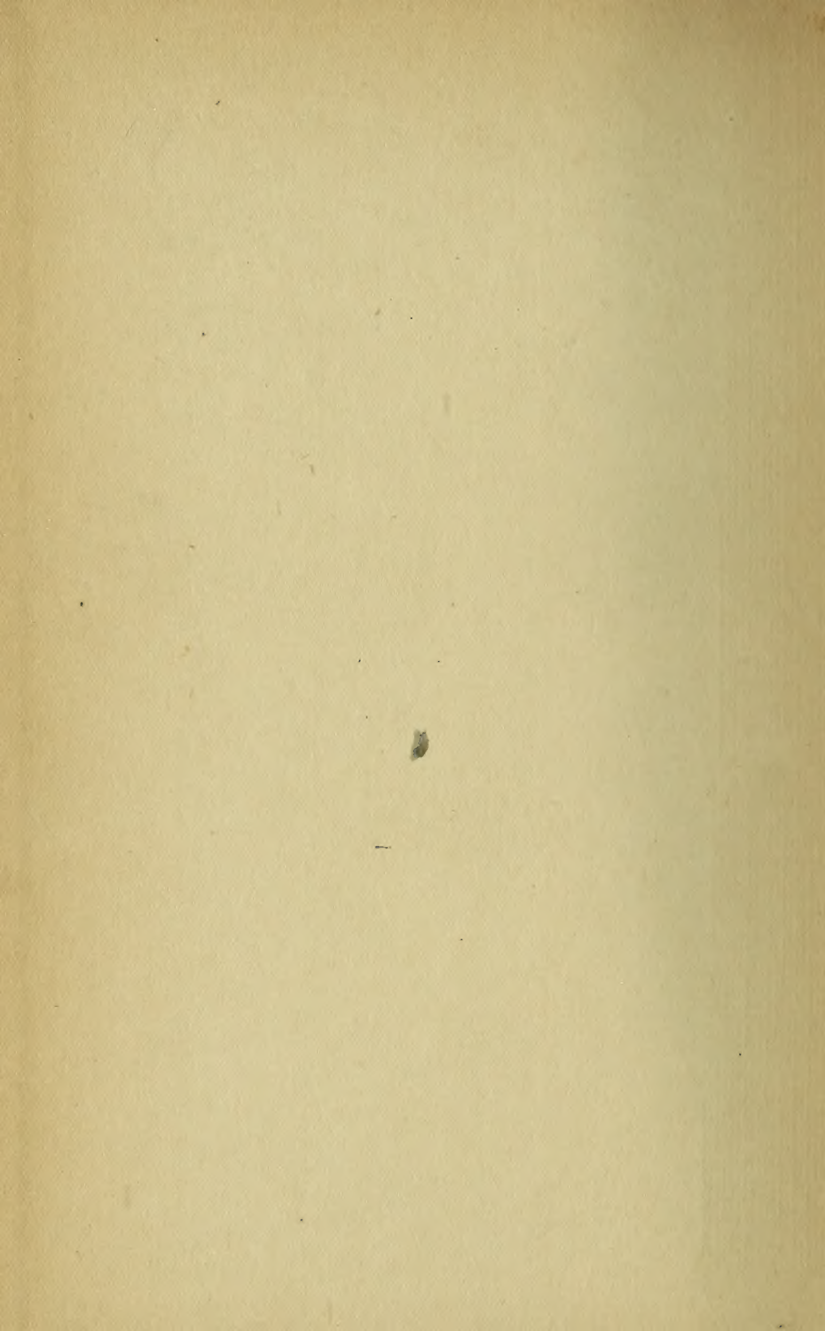
THE WITNESS OF ISRAEL

WILFRID J. MOULTON, M.A.



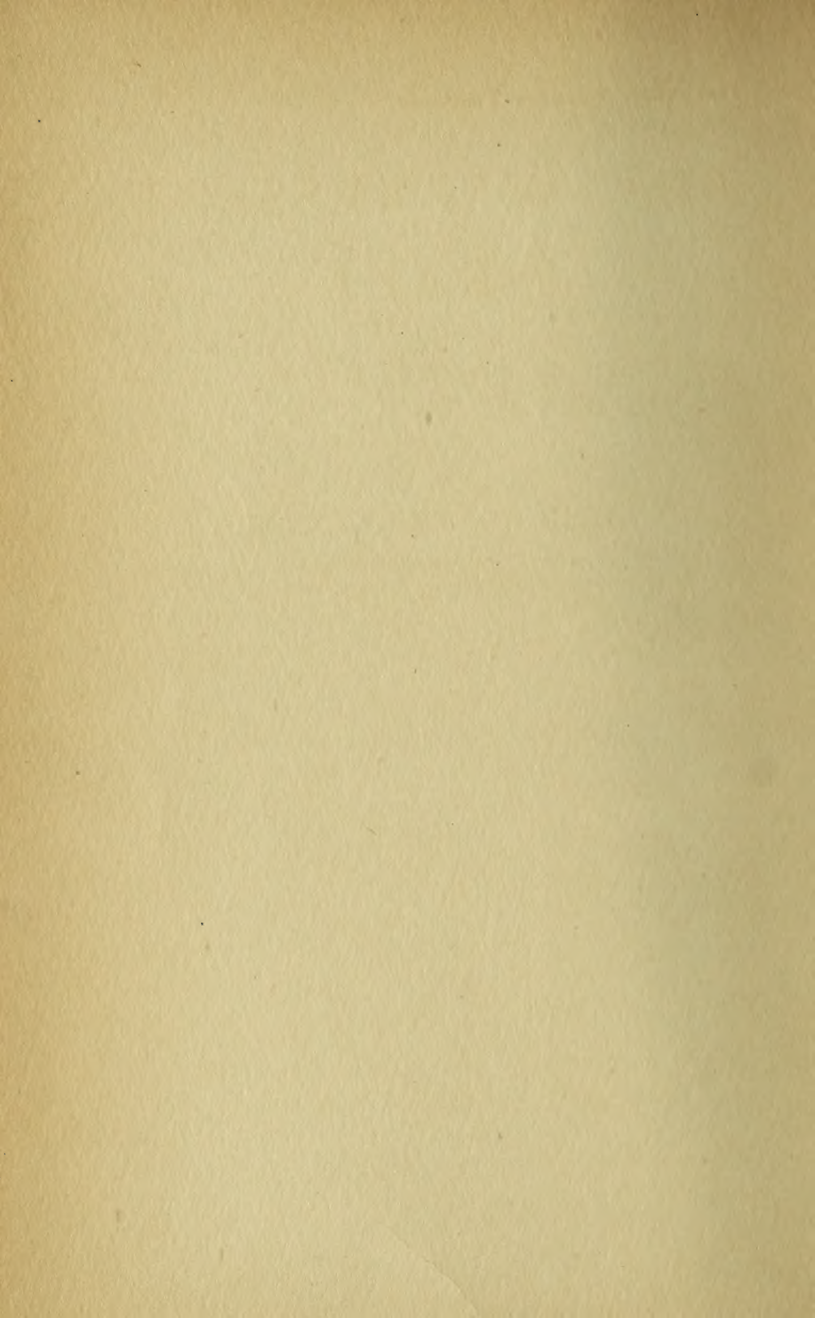
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THE WITNESS OF ISRAEL

BY

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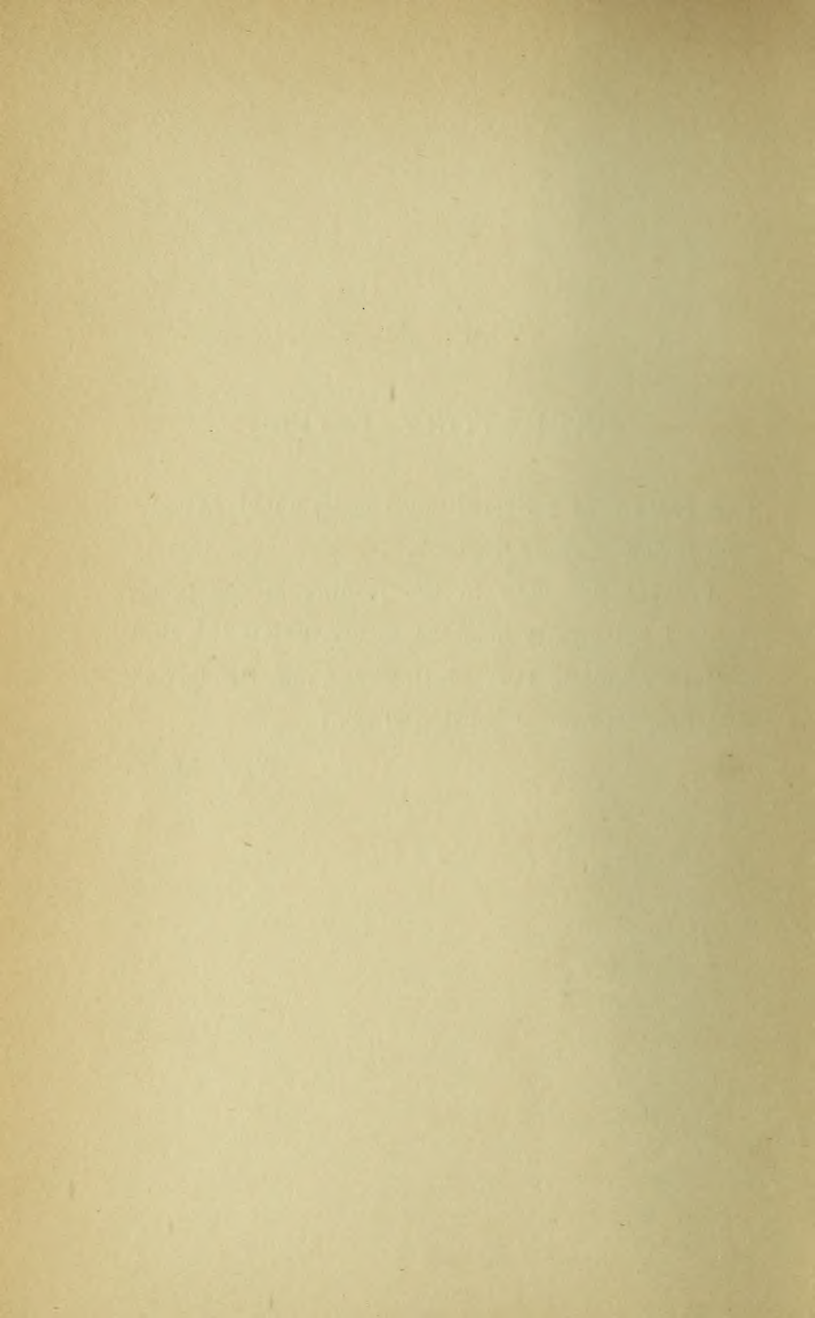
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PREFATORY NOTE

THE Lecture as delivered was made up of extracts from various parts of the book.

For valuable help in the reading of the proof-sheets I am greatly indebted to my friends the Rev. J. Hope Moulton, D.D., of Didsbury, and the Rev. J. Anderson Dawson, of Newton Stewart.

W. J. M.



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INTRODUCTION

John Wesley on the Bible—Modern perplexity created by (*a*) Archaeology, (*b*) Comparative religion, (*c*) Historical criticism —Acceptance of these results and interpretation of them two different things—Two illustrations of unsatisfactory interpretation: (*a*) by Marti; (*b*) by Winckler—Two ways of meeting these interpretations—Dr. Orr challenges the critical results—The better path to frankly accept them, but to seek a different interpretation of them—So the essential core of Wesley's words may still be retained.

ONE of the noblest passages in all John Wesley's writings is that in which he calls himself 'a man of one book.' He writes—

I have thought, I am a creature of a day, passing through life as an arrow through the air. I am a spirit come from God, and returning to God: just hovering over the great gulf; till, a few moments hence, I am no more seen; I drop into an unchangeable eternity! I want to know one thing—the way to heaven; how to land safe on that happy shore. God Himself has condescended to teach the way: for this very end He came from heaven. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price, give me the book of God! I have it; here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be *homo unius libri*. Here, then, I am, far from the busy ways of men. I sit

down alone: only God is here. In His presence I open, I read His book; for this end, to find the way to heaven.[1]

The Christian believer of the present day must often ask whether he can still make those words his own. Bewildered by the differing voices that reach his ears from every side, some bidding him at all cost hold fast in all its details to the faith of his childhood, others commanding him in the sacred name of truth to give up much of what he counts most precious, he misses the calm, clear note of authority that Wesley heard, and would fain be back again in the simpler ages of unquestioning trust.

In relation to the Bible, there are three main sources from which the new ideas proceed which call so loudly for interpretation—Archaeology, Comparative Religion, and Historical Criticism.

1. *Archaeology* has forced us to rewrite the early history of civilized man. Once it was possible to read the Old Testament, and to think that the oldest records of the human race lay before us. The boast of Josephus against the Greek historians that all other writings were but of yesterday as compared with the immemorial age of the Scriptures seemed unchallengeably true. The giant figures of the patriarchs towered aloft in lonely grandeur. In their simple nomad life men saw the first beginnings of civilization, and traced to their experiences the sacred institutions that made the

[1] Preface to Sermons.

Israel of later days. Now all is changed. Abraham stands only midway between the first civilization that we know and the coming of Christ. The code of a great lawgiver, living as far behind the time of Moses as the age of Alfred the Great is behind us, speaks of the complex laws of property and public and private duty that are the surest signs of a long-established state. Behind this king there stretches back a long line of rulers and priests pointing to periods far more remote than the historians of half a century ago ever recognized. Innumerable parallels to the morning stories of the Old Testament—the Creation, the Deluge—have been found on tablets of baked clay and cylinders, or on blocks of stone, that have lain hidden for millenniums. How stands it with the Bible in this new light? Some adjustment of our views has become absolutely necessary.

2. The same conclusion meets us when we turn to survey the widening field of knowledge opened out to us by *Comparative Religion.* From one point of view the results of this study are pure gain. It is being recognized more and more clearly that religion is a universal fact. As a recent writer puts it—

> Wherever the surging roar of life has been loudest, and wherever human life has been most profoundly moved in struggle and conflict, religion has been the cause.[1]

Whilst it is unhappily true that at present large

[1] Bousset, *What is Religion?* p. 6.

sections of the people are separated from any outward expression of religion, and that the indifference of the masses is one of the great problems of the Churches, it is none the less a fact that in all the higher circles of thought there is a new interest in religion, and a deeper recognition of its rights and value. So Bousset says again: 'There never has been, and never will be, a civilization which is progressive and vital unaccompanied by religion.'[1] Of great significance is the remark of the editor of the *Religio-Historical Books for the People*, a series which is being sold by scores of thousands in Germany, seeking to disseminate the views of advanced liberalism in theology. He says: 'To-day among the German people estrangement from religion is no longer received as "progress." Religion is again a vital problem for the people and its leaders.' Similar conclusions can be drawn from the works of writers such as William James, who examine the phenomena of religion from the standpoint of psychology, and demonstrate the right of the facts of religious experience to consideration and interpretation. Such writers, for the most part, recognize in the whole history of the religious life of mankind the handiwork of God; through all imperfect expressions and crude and barbarous institutions they seek to find the strivings of the human spirit in its ceaseless upward movement towards the divine Father of all.

Modern missionary enterprise is permeated with

[1] Op. cit. p. 3.

this spirit, and strives, by a sympathetic understanding of the stage to which other peoples have attained, to equip itself for the task of leading them up to higher levels.

But while all this is solid gain, leaving behind for ever the arid materialism of a generation ago, it is manifest that the Christian apologist, who seeks to define the relation of his religion to the other religions of the world, has a new and complex task presented to him. Can we still draw the old distinction between the one religion of revelation and all other religions of nature? Can we be loyal to truth and yet at the same time claim that in the Bible we have a unique revelation of God, that still there is none other name to set beside that of Jesus, the Saviour of the world? It is manifest that here again we must be ready to state the grounds of our assured faith that this is still true.

3. In the third place, Christian thought has to define its attitude to the results of *Historical Criticism* as applied to the books of the Bible. That criticism has proved, with overwhelming force, that some of the older views as to the way in which the sacred books were written were altogether defective. It has taken away the picture of the nation of Israel starting on its career endowed by Moses with a completely developed system of laws, adequate for all the needs of the future. Instead of that it has shown that, like the laws of other peoples, the laws of Israel grew with the life of

the nation, and were supplied to meet each successive demand as it arose. Corresponding to the three main codes of law which it discovers in the Pentateuch, it is able to point to the three periods of history during which these codes were active.

It shows first the time when in every Israelitish town and village there was a sanctuary to Jehovah, when Samuel went from place to place to offer sacrifice, when Elijah indignantly repaired the ruined altar on Mount Carmel.

Then it shows Josiah, in his noble zeal for the purity of the religion of Jehovah, destroying all that were left of these very sanctuaries, and concentrating all the worship at Jerusalem.

Finally it shows, corresponding to the latest priestly code of laws, the stately full-grown legalism of post-exilic days.

Such results do not contradict a reasonable faith. They bring home the constant presence of God in the life of the people. Once it was thought that God gave in one man's lifetime all the laws that were needful for the many centuries of the nation's life. Now we can see that it was not so. Step by step He walked with them. The supply of interpreters never failed who sought to express His will in each new crisis. If that be so, criticism shows that the life of Israel was fuller of God than was ever dreamed of before. It is plain that this result is in harmony with what we know of the general growth of nations. To understand

all the laws of England means to know the whole history of the country. Criticism says that the same is true of Israel. But it is clear once more that the bearing of all these facts upon the Christian faith calls for the most earnest consideration.

It cannot, however, be too strongly urged that while we must loyally and honestly welcome all new knowledge, from whatever source it comes to us, we are in no sense bound to all the interpretations of this knowledge which are offered to us to-day. It is sometimes forgotten that the history of institutions is not the history of ideas. Lord Acton's weighty words should be remembered—

> The history of institutions is often a history of deception and illusion; for their virtue depends on the ideas that produce and on the spirit that preserves them, and the form may remain unaltered when the substance has passed away.[1]

To learn the historical sequence of the institutions of Israel, and to trace the analogies between them and those of other nations, is illuminating and valuable; but we must not assume that when that has been done, the work of explaining the origin of its ideas is over.

We may take two illustrations of what appear to be, in this way, defective interpretations of the ascertained facts, one from the side of historical criticism, and one from archaeology.

(*a*) From the side of criticism Dr. Karl Marti,

[1] *History of Freedom*, p. 2.

after successfully editing a series of commentaries on the complete Old Testament, containing some of the finest exegetical work of the last decade, proposes in his book, *The Religion of the Old Testament; its Place among the Religions of the Nearer East*, to summarize the conclusions reached by himself and his fellow workers as to the incomparable value of the religion of Israel. This author discards altogether the traditional view as to the residence of the early ancestors of the people in Mesopotamia, and begins with a picture of a number of Bedouin tribes living in North Arabia and in the regions south of Palestine. The religion of these peoples may be best described as polydaemonism, i.e. the belief in a multitude of spiritual powers manifesting themselves in stones and trees, in springs and animals. Mount Sinai was the central place of assembly, and the common place of worship of different Semitic tribes who sojourned in the regions round it. The God of this mountain was called Jahweh (Jehovah), and was conceived as the God of the higher sphere, as the God of the air and storms, in distinction from the divine powers of the earth more properly so-called. Moses, living amongst these peoples, received a divine revelation that this God was the God of Israel, and had chosen Israel for His own people. Accordingly he went among some of the tribes which had migrated into Egypt, as the messenger of Jehovah, and led them out again to Sinai. There and at Kadesh he welded them with their kindred

tribes into one people, united by a faith that was social and ethical in its spirit. By his emphasis on the one God who claimed Israel's undivided allegiance, he thus laid the foundation of the whole magnificent structure of the Old Testament religion. From this starting-point Marti proceeds to sketch in turn the peasant religion, held by the Israelites on their first settlement in Canaan, the religion of the prophets, the religion of the law, and the fulfilment in Jesus.

Whilst there are many strong and beautiful sayings in this book, it seems to fall far short as an explanation of the facts which it presents, and to be seriously defective both at the beginning and the end. It appears unwarrantable to cut away so completely the traditional stories of the patriarchs. Moses appears to need a far deeper background than is given to him here. Moreover, in ignoring the great religious movements in Babylonia, it begins so far down the stream of history as to miss the crowning Christian thought of the great purpose of redemption running through the whole life of man upon the earth.

At the close of the exposition it is freely granted that all the various features of the prophetic ideal were concentrated in Jesus, and coalesced into one single harmonious whole, so that He realized perfectly the religion which the prophets taught. But there seems to be no room left for the doctrine of the Incarnation, for the thought that all through the ages God had been preparing for that event, and at last, in the

fullness of the times, poured out Himself in His Son. Hence the significance of the constant anticipation of the prophets of a brighter future is not firmly grasped, and Jesus becomes an Exemplar, but not in the full sense of the word the Redeemer of the world. We cannot rest content with such a statement as this.

(*b*) Turning to the side of archaeology, we find Marti's position very severely criticized by another author of great eminence, Dr. Hugo Winckler, one of the most famous Assyriologists now living. Winckler entirely rejects the suggestion that the religion of Israel developed from a nomad stage. Steeped in the knowledge of the ancient records of Babylonia, he maintains that the teaching and civilization which streamed out from Mesopotamia had, long before the age of Moses, covered the whole world of the East. He bids us go back into the dim past, and become students there. To him the religion of the Bible is only that of a sect cut off from the great world-embracing culture and teaching of Babylon. It is there we must seek for all the roots of the great conceptions of the future. With great insistence he claims that no one who has not submitted himself to the discipline necessary to attain to this knowledge of the past, and read for himself its countless records, is fit to express a judgement on these matters. Winckler's position is even less welcome to us than Marti's. In one direction, it is true, his investigations are of great value. He appears to have proved that Babylon cannot possibly be ignored in any

account of the religion of Israel before Moses. But he repudiates altogether the thought of a chosen people and of a special revelation in its history. Quite apart, therefore, from his efforts to reduce to mythological figures many personalities whose real existence seems as certain as anything in human history, we find in his exposition no basis whatever for the Christian faith as we hold it.[1]

If, then, we reject these two representative interpretations of the facts before us, it is possible to move in either of two directions. Dr. Orr, in his *Problem of the Old Testament*, and other writings, attempts to refute scholars of the school of Marti by attacking the results of the literary analysis of the Bible. He appears to hold that there is a necessary connexion between these results and the theological views of some of those who profess them. In this he is surely not justified. No man is forced to decide between rejecting altogether the teaching of Evolution, or accepting the materialistic views of certain scientific writers. Nor does the fact that a Christian teacher accepts in the main Wellhausen's dating of the component parts of the Pentateuch, compel him to believe in that scholar's statement of a non-miraculous

[1] Winckler's criticism of Marti's book is contained in a pamphlet called *Religionsgeschichtler und geschichtlicher Orient*. His views in general are expressed in a multitude of writings of various kinds. A much more moderate statement of the same theory is found in the writings of Jeremias, whose chief work, *Das Alte Testament im Lichte des Alten Orients*, is referred to in the next chapter of this book, cited henceforth as *ATAO*.

Christianity. Whilst we most cordially recognize the great value of Dr. Orr's theological writings, and owe much to their teaching, we are convinced, for reasons which are partially given in the course of this book, that in this instance his fire is misdirected. In their broad outlines the results of modern criticism have secured the allegiance of nearly all the scholars of all the Protestant Churches, and seem to be impregnable. The task of the future will be much more to interpret than disprove these results.

We have, therefore, chosen in this book to take another path. Accepting frankly and fully all that a reasonable criticism seems to demand, we desire to show that the claim of Israel to be a unique people with a unique mission can still be abundantly, and, in fact, the more clearly and rationally, justified. Believing that history culminated in Jesus Christ, the Word of God, we wish to trace the formation of the people from whom He came, and to show how, through their eventful history, the hope of His coming was always being presented in many changing forms. We believe that the universal phenomena of religion afford a proof that God is everywhere, seeking to make men know and understand Him. Nature, with its signs of mysterious forces, has one message from Him; all the vague stirrings of moral thoughts and sentiments have another. Here and there great souls, in what we call heathen lands, have caught true messages from Him, and have partially understood Him. But there runs

through human history one line, along which the clearest knowledge of God has come, and that line is the one which runs through the history of the people of Israel, and terminates in Jesus Christ.

Changing the metaphor, we may say that a great river has many tributaries. They, too, rise up among the hills, and each as it enters the central stream makes it fuller and more fruitful. But we do not mistake the tributaries for the river. So it is in God's revelation of Himself to man. The stream had its source far back in the remote past, beyond the keenest human vision. It flows, now rapid and stormy, now calm and broad, sometimes turbid, bearing with it masses of soil from the banks between which it flows, fed here and there by smaller brooks and rivulets, pouring itself at last into the great deep. Israel's religion is the river, the river of God bringing life wherever it goes, the only river broad and deep enough to fertilize the whole earth. Every true and high conception of duty or of God is a tributary meant to feed the great stream. But in the full sense of belonging to the central river the writings of the Bible stand alone, and have a special inspiration in which no other books in universal literature can share. If such a thesis can be maintained, we may continue to hold all that is essential in the quotation from Wesley, with which this chapter started, and own that to us, as to him, the Bible is still the Book of books. The present lecture is offered as a slight contribution to that proof.

Believing that the meaning and interpretation of the acorn is found in the oak, of the bulb in the flower, we seek to demonstrate the value of the Scriptures by showing the actual wealth of their contents, and the goal towards which they tend.

The book is divided into three sections—

1. *Preparation.* A survey of the world of thought from which the founders of the nation of Israel came, and an account of the settlement of the people in Palestine, with some study of the essential and differentiating features of their ancestral faith.

2. *Anticipation.* An exposition and discussion of the hopes for the future which filled the minds of the great teachers and prophets of Israel, as they were developed in Israel's history.

3. *Realization.* An examination of the way in which these hopes have been fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

BOOK I

PREPARATION



CHAPTER I

BABYLONIA

Early conditions and history of Babylonia—Sumerian and Semitic populations—Babylon becomes centre of a kingdom—Place of religion in public life—Spread of Babylonian culture—Importance of this fact—Religion considered under three aspects: (*a*) Astral view of the universe. World-Ages. Tendencies towards monotheism. (*b*) Exaltation of deities of important towns. Illustration from Marduk of Babylon. Monotheistic tendencies here. (*c*) Expressions of personal religion. The Penitential Psalms. Contrast with Bible teaching. In all, absence of the conception of God as a Person. A system of thought in travail. Need of a great creative personality.

BETWEEN the Tigris and the Euphrates lies the land from which come our earliest written records of the human race. To-day for the most part it is barren and marshy. The two rivers,

flowing between avenues of ruins, sweep away dykes, once reared to curb the power of these mighty streams, tear down their banks, once lined with palaces, riot at their will through channels made by their own irresistible waters, and bring with them the deposits of the mountain sides to enrich the soil of their deltas.[1]

But in the ancient times a splendid system of canals

[1] Goodspeed, *History of the Babylonians and Assyrians*, p. 12.

carrying the waters to every field made the rich alluvial soil the most fertile in the world. Herodotus, after saying that this territory is of all that we know the best by far for producing grain, and speaking of the great size of the blades of wheat and barley, refrains from giving the measurements of the millet and sesame there grown, because he knows his readers will not believe him. It is easy, then, to understand why, millenniums before the age of Herodotus, the nomad tribes, pasturing their flocks in Arabia on the south, or on the steppes of Russia beyond the Caucasus on the west, or on the uplands of Asia on the north and east, cast longing eyes on this land of promise, and, driven on by hunger, pressed in to fight for its possession.

The origin and history of the first inhabitants of this region lie far back in the distant past, too remote for us ever to hope to recover it. The ambition of modern discovery, despite all its marvels, must have its limits somewhere. But we are now able to speak definitely of a highly civilized people settled there at least as early as 4000–5000 B.C. This people, known as the Sumerian, were the inventors of that wonderful system of wedge-shaped or cuneiform writing in which all the Babylonian and Assyrian inscriptions were composed. Their own language was preserved after the race had passed away, being used by the priests of later times for their religious texts.

> It enjoyed (says Winckler) the dignity accorded to Latin as the tongue of the learned and of the Church in

the Middle Ages and in more modern times, and maintained itself in this rôle for a period more than twice as long.[1]

This 'oldest language of civilization' remains as the chief witness of the stage of culture to which these predecessors of the Babylonians must have attained.

The chief records from this region that we possess, whilst written in the wedge symbols, belong, however, to the Semitic group of languages. The term 'Semite' springs from the division of the peoples given in the tenth chapter of Genesis, and signifies properly descent from Shem. The distribution of peoples there made seems to be given with reference to political history and civilization rather than language. Certainly the Canaanites, judged by their speech, were closely allied to the Hebrews, and widely separated from the descendants of Ham. But it is enough for our purpose to understand by the Semites the chief inhabitants of South-west Asia, who came, in all probability, from a primitive home in Arabia.

At the earliest period to which our present records reach, this country appears to have been divided into a large number of city-states. The names of some of these cities—Eridu, Schirpurla, Nippur, Ur, Larsa, in the south; Kisch, Agade, Sippar, and Babylon, in the north—have been preserved. Which of these was the oldest cannot yet be determined. Their history, so far as we can trace it, consisted in a series

[1] *History of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 12.

of struggles for supremacy, the rulers of one city exercising from time to time a suzerainty over others. Some of the names of these ancient kings have survived. In the famous city of Ur, so familiar to Bible students as the home of Abraham, it is possible to trace a succession of four different dynasties, extending from about 3900 to 2600 B.C. At last, about 2000 B.C.,[1] the rulers of Babylon succeeded in establishing their supremacy, and in uniting North and South under one rule. The sixth king of this dynasty was the well-known Hammurabi, the lawgiver whose recently discovered code sheds so much light upon the social conditions of his period. Long before his time the culture of the Euphrates valley had been developed. Mighty temples, boasting already an antiquity of many centuries, stood proudly in the cities; giant blocks of stone, quarried in many lands, had been shaped into statues by artists who would take high rank even to-day; a carefully organized priesthood directed the ritual and sought to control the life of the people; the system of writing in use had already reached its last stage of development. Babylon became the heir of a great past, without itself contributing much that was new. But as Jastrow, from whom the preceding sentences have been largely drawn, says—

With him (Hammurabi) begins a new epoch of history.

[1] Mr. L. W. King in his *Chronicles Concerning Early Babylonian Kings* seems to prove decisively that Hammurabi's date has been put too early by most writers, and that he was reigning about 1950 B.C.

Henceforth the supremacy of Babylon remains undisputed, and the other old centres, after the loss of their political power, retained a certain importance only through their sanctuaries, to which pilgrimages were made as before, and through their commercial activity, which, with the union of the different Babylonian districts, now became more vigorous.[1]

All the records of these two thousand years are permeated with religion. Religion was the mainspring of intellectual activity; literature centred round the temples; priests were the leaders in all departments of thought. It is therefore of supreme interest for us to inquire how far these earliest teachers received 'authentic tidings of invisible things,' how far there was in the world even then a *praeparatio evangelica.*

In the first place, it must be observed that the influence of the systems of thought that arose in the Euphrates valley extended far beyond Western Asia. One of the most enthusiastic students of these records claims that behind them there lies a conception of the universe, and a teaching corresponding thereto, which spread out over Egypt and Arabia, over Persia, China, India, Mexico, over Greece and Spain, and lies at the roots of the myths and legends which meet us in those lands.

This teaching inquires after the origin of things, and comprises the coming into being of the universe from the first beginnings out of a chaos into the present world, and its further development in future ages up to the renewing

[1] Jastrow, *Die Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens*, p. 37.

of the world. It is essentially a religious doctrine, and that in the sense of a latent monotheism. Its characteristic is the expectation of a deliverer going forth from the Godhead, who in the course of ages overcomes the powers of darkness.[1]

So sweeping a conclusion cannot be said to be warranted by the evidence before us. It is, at least, arguable that the similarities in the myths of such widely separated peoples can be accounted for more naturally by explaining them as the outward expression of elemental desires and needs common to man everywhere.[2] But the striking fact that, as late as the 15th century B.C., the kings of Egypt corresponded with their vassals in Canaan in Babylonian script and language, shows how widespread the influence of the Euphrates lands was. To-day, Western Asia is governed by the conceptions of Islam; its intellectual and religious life lies altogether under the rule of the Prophet. It is not too much to say that in the age of Abraham, and long afterwards, Babylon was the world's spiritual centre, just as Rome was in the eyes of a monk of the Middle Ages. Consequences of the utmost importance result from such a statement. The often-painted picture of the ancestors of the Hebrew people as rough Bedouins of the desert, with crude animistic, religious ideas, from which gradually the purer teaching of the prophets emerged, begins to fade. It belongs to the days before the voice of the ancient

[1] Jeremias, *ATAO*, p. 5.

[2] Cf. Oesterley, *Evolution of the Messianic Idea.*

East had been understood, and is out of date. Before it can be repainted, the deeper faith which underlies the phenomena now brought to light, just as the Arab's faith in one God lies underneath his superstitious terror of demons and jinns, must be considered and understood.

As we turn and consider the religious texts that archaeology has now translated for us, the first impression is one of hopeless confusion. Gods of the sky, gods of the earth, gods of the deep, families of gods—fathers and mothers, sons and daughters—local gods of cities and hills, gods directing and involved in all the processes of nature, confront and bewilder us. The whole effect is that of a crass polytheism, full of degrading superstition. But as we look closer, there are two directions at least along which we can move with less confusion. The first is that of the consideration of the relation of the heavens and heavenly bodies to human life. The second is found in the tendency to raise to supreme rank the chief gods of a ruling city or state.

(*a*) It is not easy for a modern town-dweller to realize how much the aspect of the skies meant to men of former days. For us the gas-lamps have put out the stars, and the average cultivated man of to-day is all but entirely oblivious of the commonest appearances of the heavens. But it was far different with those who lived millenniums ago on the great plains of Babylonia. They had marked the fact that the sky

is crossed by a broad belt, called the zodiac, outside of which sun and moon and planets never stray. They had noted that each month as the moon rises the same girdle of stars surrounds us in the great vault of heaven. Upon the zodiac they had marked the twelve constellations through which the sun passes month by month, the year beginning with the spring equinox. A knowledge of these familiar signs of the zodiac can be traced back far behind the age of Hammurabi. One other fact had been observed which is of great significance. Owing to the gradual change that is going on in the direction of the earth's axis, the sun does not rise from year to year in exactly the same place in the heavens. Seeing that this slow movement is completed in about 26,000 years, at the end of which the sun is in the same position again, it is plain that at the beginning of each twelfth part of this period —i.e. roughly speaking, every 2,200 years—the sun stands at the spring equinox in a fresh sign of the zodiac. Then began, according to the old astronomers, a new world-age. One such world-age began in the 8th century B.C., and was marked in Babylon by the framers of the calendar, who began their dates afresh from that period. That was the age of the Ram, lasting till the 15th century of our era. According to this measure of time, we live to-day in the era of Pisces, the Fish. But in Babylonia our most ancient records take us back to the age of the Twins, whilst somewhere about 3700 B.C. the age of the Bull began.

It has been pointed out that that age began with the dynasty of Sargon I, the great conqueror who boasts that he led his armies westwards to the Mediterranean, and whose son styled himself 'King of the Four (world-) Regions.'[1]

Let us now look at the universe as conceived by these ancient thinkers. They looked far above them into the northern heavens, towards the pole star, and counted that part of the sky the first division. The zodiac formed the central division, and the southern depths the third. This threefold division was reflected on the earth itself by the air and sky, the solid earth, and the watery deeps. At the head of their pantheon the priests placed the famous triad of gods, Anu, Bel, and Ea—Anu, god of the northern sky; Ea, of the depths; Bel, of the zodiac. This same threefold division was repeated in the zodiac itself, where Moon, Sun, and Venus, the evening star, were seats of the deities Sin, Samas, Istar. Into the innumerable complexities into which the conceptions of these great gods and their relationships pass, it is not possible for us to enter. It must suffice for us to note that in the movements of these heavenly bodies men sought to trace out the divine will and the plan of human destiny. What concerns us most is the question how far the thought of one supreme God rose above this

[1] On this see the article by Jeremias on 'Ages of the World,' in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. i. Recent discussions as to the age of these calculations do not appear to have shaken this writer's position.

confusion. The answer is not doubtful. Anu, represented as 'the lofty God,' designated as early as Hammurabi's days simply *ilu*, 'god,' seems almost to sum up in himself the attributes of deity. But he has no personality, and so remains a bare conception of speculative thought, immeasurably removed from the God of Israel. Sin, the moon-god, is worshipped in lofty strains. One of the old hymns may well be quoted as an illustration—

Father, long-suffering and full of forgiveness, whose hand upholds the life of all mankind,
Lord, thy divinity, like the far-off heaven, fills the wide sea with fear. . . .
Firstborn, omnipotent, whose heart is immensity, and there is none who shall discern it. . . .
Lord, the ordainer of the laws of heaven and earth, whose command may not be [broken] . . .
In heaven who is supreme? Thou alone, thou art supreme!
On earth who is supreme? Thou alone, thou art supreme!
As for thee, thy will is made known in heaven, and the angels bow their faces.
As for thee, thy will is made known on earth, and the spirits below kiss the ground.
As for thee, thy will is blown on high like the wind; the stall and the fold are quickened.
As for thee, thy will is done on the earth, and the herb grows green.[1]

One listens to such words, and realizes that, taken alone, they might serve to express the purest monotheism. Yet such thoughts sink again into the abyss of polytheism. We see men who seemed to stand on

[1] Sayce, *Gifford Lectures*, p. 316.

the very threshold, one step from the true knowledge, and yet by them that step was never taken.

(*b*) Turning now to the second line of unification we have indicated, we note that in the earliest times each village and town possessed its own god who cared for its welfare. When one town overcame another, the god of the former was hailed as victor. The vanquished god might be forgotten, or counted as servant of the conqueror, or treated as his son. Hence it was that in course of time many of the stories of family relationship arose.

Such deities can be divided into two classes: (1) Those of purely local origin; (2) Those which were local in so far as they were attached to one definite place, but still, at the same time, possessed a more general character as incorporations of the powers of nature.[1] It is clear that the second class is by far the most important, and that there, if anywhere, we must seek for the potency of higher developments of thought.

As the best illustration of such tendencies we take the case of Marduk, the god of Babylon. This god was originally a sun-god, 'symbolizing more specifically the sun of the spring solstice, which triumphs over the storms of the winter.' His name is first found with any certainty in Hammurabi's inscriptions. This king counted himself the favourite of Marduk, and ascribes to him all his successes. Whenever he pays

[1] Cf. Jastrow, op. cit. p. 108.

his dues in any sanctuary, he does not forget to ascribe honour to Marduk also. An important change in the theological thought of the day followed.

Ancient myths were transformed so as to accord to Marduk the place due to him. Important acts, such as the regulation of the order of the universe, and the creation of mankind—hitherto ascribed to Bel of Nippur, to Ea of Eridu, or to a goddess Aruru—were transferred to Marduk. The incantation rituals were to a large extent altered, with a view to establishing the position of Marduk as the ultimate source of healing, of protection, and of all blessings. The gods were represented as forming a court around their chief, hailing Marduk as their leader, and paying him homage. The hymns composed in his honour, and the prayers addressed to him by the rulers, embody sentiments that might be regarded as an index of a decided advance towards a monotheistic conception of the Universe.[1]

How far did this advance reach? Perhaps the most striking instance is found on a tablet published by Dr. T. G. Pinches, where the name Marduk appears to be used as a general designation for godhead.[2] This tablet is late in date, but appears to be a copy of a far older inscription. Part of it reads—

Ninip is Marduk of strength.
Nergal is Marduk of battle.
Bel is Marduk of lordship and dominion.
Nebo is Marduk of wealth (or trading).
Sin is Marduk the illuminator of the night.
Samas is Marduk of decisions, &c.

[1] Hastings' D.B. v. 545*a*.

[2] Cf. supra on Anu, p. 12.

Dr. Pinches remarks—

We here get Marduk expressly identified with no less than thirteen other gods ; and as the tablet is broken, it is probable that he was, when the text was perfect, identified with at least as many more—in fact, these gods were all manifestations of Marduk, with reference to the various things named. This, in itself, is sufficiently remarkable, and may be regarded, it seems to me, as being at least an approach to monotheism.[1]

Jastrow doubts this conclusion, and says that such words are rather a witness of the attempt which accompanied the centralization of political power at Babylon to heap upon the head of Marduk all divine attributes.[2] This was strengthened by the fact that Marduk appears represented as standing on a bull. In the 'Age of the Bull' this gave him a still further supremacy.

But whatever political and astronomical considerations may have contributed to this elevation, we come in sight again of the same phenomenon which we have observed before. These thinkers have travelled along a path that seems destined to lead them to a true monotheism. But they never reached the goal. The last great king of Babylon, Nebuchadrezzar, speaks in lofty tones of the greatness of Marduk, and prays to him—

Cause me to love thy supreme rule.
Implant the fear of thy divinity in my heart.

[1] *Transactions of the Victoria Institute*, vol. xxviii. pp. 10–11.
[2] Op. cit. p. 203 n.

Grant to me whatsoever may seem good before thee,
Since it is thou that dost control my life.

But this does not prevent him from restoring the temple of Samas or praising Nebo as 'overseer of the hosts of heaven and earth.'

We miss here altogether the exclusiveness that inheres in the biblical conception of God as a righteous Person. Speculation alone has never found God. Even though it is said of Marduk that he is 'The Creator of All,' 'The Exalted One in Heaven and the Mighty One on Earth,' who is worthy 'that his greatness should be proclaimed to the far-off peoples,' yet this message would have conveyed only a name for the Supreme; it would not have disclosed a character.

(*c*) If, then, the path of Babylonian speculation branches off into side tracks, is there any other path that we can trace that might have led the traveller to the journey's end? The one remaining direction in which we can look is that of personal experience; and the mass of cuneiform prayers and penitential psalms that have been deciphered and published must guide us here.

The first thought that arises from a reading of these records is that men lived in those days in perpetual fear. Before them they saw constantly the danger, through some neglect of duty, some ceremonial failure, some positive transgression, of awaking the anger of a god and bringing heavy trouble on

themselves. The approach of an enemy, the failure of crops, bodily sickness, a thousand other mischances, went to show that some god was wroth with those concerned. Hence the division of the month into fortunate and unfortunate days, seeing that on some days the gods rested from their anger. Hence the mass of omen-formulae and incantations which accumulated at the temples and increased the importance of the priests. To many a man the whole world must have been 'with dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms,' and religion a burdensome load to 'those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.'

But, we ask, were there not amongst all these writers loftier spirits, some of whom it may be said—

> Through such souls alone
> God stooping shows sufficient of His light
> For us i' the dark to rise by?

Let us quote in evidence of this higher light from the most beautiful of these psalms, which, it is said, might be addressed 'to any god'—

> An offence against my god unknowingly have I committed;
> An offence against my goddess unknowingly have I wrought.
> O lord, my sins are many, my transgressions are great!
> O god, whom I know, know not, my sins are many, my transgressions are great!
> O goddess, whom I know, know not, my sins are many, my transgressions are great!
> The sin that I sinned I knew not,
> The transgression I committed I knew not,
> The offence that I wrought I knew not.

The lord in the wrath of his heart has regarded me,
The god has visited me in the anger of his heart;
The goddess has been violent against me, and has put me to grief.

I sought for help, and none took my hand;
I wept, and none stood at my side;
I cried aloud, and there was none that heard me.
I am in trouble and hiding, and dare not look up.
To my god, the merciful one, I turn myself, I utter my prayer,
The feet of my goddess I kiss and water with tears.
To the god whom I know, know not, I utter my prayer.

. . . .

O lord, cast not away thy servant!
Overflowing with tears, take him by the hand!
The sins I have sinned, turn to a blessing;
The transgressions I have committed may the wind carry away
Strip off my manifold transgressions as a garment.

. . . .

O god whom I know, know not, seven times seven are my transgressions, forgive my sins!
O goddess whom I know, know not, seven times seven are my transgressions, forgive my sins!
Forgive my sins and let me humble myself before thee.
May thy heart be appeased as the heart of a mother who has borne children!
May it be appeased as that of a mother who has borne children, as that of a father who has begotten them.[1]

A still more pathetic strain is put into the mouth of a suffering king. He describes how he sought in vain for deliverance. Neither soothsayers, nor magicians, nor seers could give him help. He claims that he fulfilled all duties—

[1] Sayce, *Gifford Lectures*, pp. 419–21; Jeremias, *Monotheistische Strömungen*, pp. 37–8.

But I thought only of prayer and weeping,
Prayer was my rule, sacrifice my principle,
The day of god's worship was my heart's desire.

. . . .

I taught my land to keep the name of god,
To glorify the name of the goddess I instructed my people,
For I know that before god such is well-becoming.
But what in itself seems good, that with god is evil,
And what in itself is contemptible, that with god is good.
Who understands the counsel of the gods in heaven?
The plan of god, full of darkness, who established it?
How should purblind men understand the way of god?

The text ends with an expression of confidence—

I know a time when my tears shall cease.[1]

As we ponder such words we cannot miss their deep sincerity. Here are men 'groping after God, if haply they may find Him.' The use of the personal pronoun '*my* god,' '*my* goddess,' seems to suggest an intimacy of relationship. But it is plain that these seekers had not found the one God, in whose will is our peace. The expressions of penitence, as has been said, sound like parodies of such words as, 'Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in Thy sight.' Baentsch comments on such utterances—

This religion certainly had its psalmists, but it lacked the *prophet* who could lead the hearts that were thirsting after God from the labyrinth of polytheism into the recognition and adoration of the one God, in spirit and in truth.[2]

[1] Translated from Schrader's *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*, pp. 385–7.

[2] *Altorientalischer und Israelitischer Monotheismus*, p. 19.

Similarly Jastrow writes—

These prayers show us how strong pure love and dependence on the gods could be in Babylonia and Assyria, but even here it is always a question of some sort of desire of the king, usually for long life and happiness. In this direction the spiritualizing of the Babylonian religion very soon found its limits. Without a complete transformation of its conception of the relation between deity and humanity it could not rise above a fixed point. Prayer in its higher form, as the result of an irresistible inward impulse without any kind of external after-thought, proceeding simply from the longing to enter into closer fellowship with a higher power, would have required a radical revolution of the views about religion.[1]

We come, therefore, for the third time to the same conclusion. In the desires of the pious, as in the national worship and the speculations about the universe, were tendencies that led towards the one true God. This whole great system of thought was in travail, groaning in pain together. But 'the children are come to the birth and there is not strength to bring forth.' Babylon never had the great creative personality who could stand over this chaos and say, 'Let there be light.' If it be true that the influences of Babylon were so far-reaching, it may be that in the simpler pantheon of China traces of this old world are still existent. But to find how God at last taught man to know Him as He is, and prepared the path for a fuller revelation, we must turn elsewhere.

[1] Op. cit. ii. p. 139.

CHAPTER II

THE PATRIARCHAL PERIOD

Abraham as the great creative personality—Wellhausen on the patriarchs—Difficulty of his position—The patriarchs as Canaanite heroes—Objections to this—Positive reasons for historical character of patriarchs—Common tradition of all the sources of Genesis—Archaeological considerations: (*a*) Changes wrought by accession of Hammurabi; (*b*) The fourteenth chapter of Genesis—Restatement of the Bible narrative—Its intrinsic credibility—Reflections of Babylonian customs—Simplicity of religious ideas and practices, contrast with Exodus—Conclusion in favour of Biblical tradition—Abraham as father of the faithful.

AT the head of the Bible history of the Hebrews there stands a grand figure which is represented as being the great creative personality for whom, though unconsciously, all the world was waiting. It is recorded there that in the heart of this ancient culture just described, at Ur and at Haran, two great seats of the worship of the moon-god, there lived a man to whom there came a clear call from God, and a true understanding of the divine nature. Driven on by this call, he wandered out from his home, took the great caravan route past Damascus to the south,

and, in the freer conditions of life in Canaan, held communion with the Most High.

The figures of Abraham and his successors have caused much perplexity to historians and critics. In the theory of the religion held by the Wellhausen school there is no room for them at all. As Wellhausen puts it—

> We attain to no historical knowledge of the patriarchs, but only of the time when the stories about them arose in the Israelite people; this later age is here unconsciously projected, in its inner and outward features, into hoar antiquity, and is reflected there like a glorified mirage.

As it is impossible to regard Abraham as the name of a people, he is probably 'a free creation of unconscious art. He is, perhaps, the youngest figure in the company, and it was probably at a comparatively late period that he was put before Isaac.'[1] If it is objected to this, that these stories, on Wellhausen's own theory, arose in the days of the Syrian wars, and reflect nothing less than the experiences of the Israelites in the eighth and ninth centuries, he replies—

> It is not difficult to understand that a people which found itself incessantly driven into war, not only dreamed of an eternal peace in the future, but also embodied the wishes of its heart in these peaceful forms of the golden age in the past.[2]

[1] *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, pp. 319–20.
[2] Ibid. p. 321.

This is a surprising turn for the argument to take, and is extremely unsatisfying. But apart from that, the very human experiences of the different patriarchs, whose portraits are painted with all the blots left on them, are as unlike 'a glorified mirage' as they well can be. There is little that is idyllic in Abraham's adventures in Gerar (Gen. xx.), or Isaac's in the same place, as recorded in chapter xxi., or in Jacob's humiliating flight into Aram. Legend paints with a freer hand than this.

At the present day the favourite theory is that Abraham is in origin a Canaanitish figure. When the Israelites took possession of the land of Palestine they found stories of certain heroes clinging to some of the ancient sanctuaries. By adopting these heroes as their own ancestors they achieved a double end. In the first place they obtained some foundation for their claim to the land in the promises supposed to have been given by God to these ancient worthies, and in the second place they provided a sanction for their practice of worshipping Jehovah at these time-honoured shrines.[1]

It must, however, be said that if this were the aim of these narratives it was very imperfectly realized. The patriarchs are never represented as having occupied more than a very limited portion of the land. Abraham lives mostly in the neighbourhood of Hebron and Beersheba, Isaac at Beersheba, Jacob at Shechem.

[1] So Stade, *A. T. Theologie*, p. 64.

Abraham is always represented as a mere sojourner. He was obliged to acquire by purchase even a burying-place for his dead. Actual possession or rights he had none. His only claim was based upon the promise of God.

None the less, critics of this school are unanimous that the life of the patriarchal period contributed nothing of importance to the religion of later days. The undoubted traces of Babylonian influences in the Old Testament they consider to be later than the conquest of Palestine. They reject as untrustworthy the tradition that the ancestors of Israel ever lived in Mesopotamia. Accordingly, they count of no importance at all, at any rate till very much later, the subjects discussed in our last chapter.

We must now proceed to consider the reasons we have for believing that these narratives do, on the contrary, contain sound historical reminiscences of the past.

It must be observed, in the first place, that all three of the main strands of narrative in Genesis agree in describing Mesopotamia as the cradle of the race.[1] Further, the whole story of Jacob's flight to his kinsfolk in Syria, together with the reference in Deut. xxvi. 5 to the 'wandering Aramean,' show how firm was the conviction that it was from the north, and not from the south, that Israel's ancestors came. We have

[1] J. in Gen. xii. 1 ff.; E. in Joshua xxiv. ii. ff.; P. in Gen. xi. 31 ff.

no right to put aside a deeply-rooted national memory like this except on altogether necessary grounds. At the time when, according to Stade, these legends were being shaped, Israel was in the throes of its life-and-death struggle with Syria. Can anything be more improbable than that these hated Syrians should be represented as Israel's own closely related kinsmen, if loyalty to fact did not compel such a statement?

Passing onwards, it must be noted that a migration from Mesopotamia into Canaan at the time of the Hammurabi dynasty is in itself an extremely probable fact. Winckler argues that the accession of this dynasty meant great and revolutionary changes in the religion of Babylonia, which would be specially felt in Ur and Haran, the seats of the ancient moon-worship. Hence a resident in either of these places, desiring to find free scope for the practice of his religion, would turn most naturally to Canaan, where the influence of these new rulers would not yet reach.[1] It may even be that the religious turmoil of such a time was the outward factor which aroused in Abraham, regarded as a truly historical figure, his consciousness of God. At any rate, it is most significant that two places such as Ur and Haran, of which little knowledge could have been possessed in the days of the Israelite monarchy, should have been singled out as the original home of Abraham, and that these should have been just the two cities whence a new faith might have been expected.

[1] *Abraham als Babylonier*, pp. 25–6.

If this is nothing but coincidence, it is surely a very remarkable one.

Similar conclusions arise when we consider the famous fourteenth chapter of Genesis. A generation ago Nöldeke declared that criticism had for ever disproved the historicity of this chapter. According to Ed. Meyer it was the work of a Jew of the Exile, who, living in Babylon, had become acquainted with the oldest history of that country, and, for some reason unknown to us, had fitted into it the figure of Abraham.[1] Later criticism attempts to separate different literary sources in the chapter, and expresses various opinions about their historical value.

But meanwhile archaeology has been at work on the names of the chapter. It has been shown that Amraphel, king of Shinar, is the great Hammurabi of Babylon. In the early years of Hammurabi his throne was subject to Elam, and therefore his army would be controlled by the king of Elam. Arioch, king of Larsa (Ellasar), was son of an Elamite king. The Elamite king styles himself 'Prince of the land of Amurru (Palestine and Syria).' Hence we have already found a satisfying explanation of the statement that the Elamite king summoned help from his vassals, and sent a force against his rebellious subjects in Palestine. Whilst, therefore, no mention has been found of this particular expedition, nor of any of the five kings named in v. 2, nor of Abraham or Melchizedek, the

[1] Cf. Kent, *Beginnings of Hebrew History*, p. 8

narrative, in broad outline, fits in perfectly well with what we do know. That a sudden night attack on the rear of the returning army might result in the recapture of the prisoners and the spoil is perfectly credible. As to Melchizedek, it was argued by Wellhausen that he also is an artistic creation, a projection of the post-exilic high-priesthood into Abraham's time. But it is, to say the least, extremely improbable that this later community, with its bitter hatred of the heathen, should have sought a prototype for its religious head among the Canaanites. On the other hand, we know from the Tel el-Amarna tablets that in the 15th century B.C. the king of Jerusalem took the leading place in Southern Canaan. In Joshua x. 1, Adoni-zedek of Jerusalem heads a coalition against the Hebrews. It is at least possible that as far back as Hammurabi's age the king of this city was recognized as a leader, and held in high honour. If so, we have an additional reason for the later choice of Jerusalem as the seat of the monarchy. David and his successors claimed the old traditions of Jerusalem, even as Charles the Great was hailed as Roman Emperor, and became the heir of the Caesars.[1] It is admittedly hard to draw definite conclusions from this chapter. Professor Sayce still holds strongly that cuneiform documents of the Hammurabi age lie behind the Hebrew text.[2] He thinks it possible that

[1] So Gunkel, *Genesis*, pp. 252–3.
[2] *Expository Times*, vol. xvii. pp. 498 ff.

the Hebrew translation was made about the age of David and Samuel. If so, it is unreasonable to refuse to believe that we have here a genuine historical recollection of a warlike exploit of the Hebrew patriarch. At any rate, the fact that the whole *milieu* of the chapter is true to history strongly confirms the belief in the general trustworthiness of the tradition. Whilst, therefore, it is possible that certain archaeologists have exaggerated the value of this chapter as a witness to Abraham's real existence, it is fair to say that at least it adds distinctly to the cumulative force of the arguments we have adduced. It is in the light of such considerations that we must read what Dr. G. A. Smith says about the patriarchs. Speaking of the full and vivid pictures that archaeology now presents of Palestine during this period,—the constant passing of armies and embassies, the mountain keeps with their Egyptian garrisons, the cities on their mounds walled with broad bulwarks of brick and stone,—he adds—

But amidst all that crowded life we peer in vain for any trace of the fathers of the Hebrews; we listen in vain for any mention of their names. This is the whole change archaeology has wrought: it has given us a background and an atmosphere for the stories of Genesis; it is unable to recall or to certify its heroes.[1]

In reply to this, one is disposed to say that it would be most amazing if archaeology could do this. We

[1] *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the O. T.*, pp. 101-2.

have not the smallest ground to expect it. In the classical Roman literature of the first century A.D. there is one uncertain reference to our Lord. Contemporary history knows nothing of the birth of great spiritual forces. But the argument from such silence to the denial of the very existence of Jesus is one which we know how to stigmatize. Dr. G. A. Smith makes no such deduction in the case of Abraham. He admits the probability of a kernel of historical truth at the heart of these stories. But because of the fact, which we freely admit, that very much tribal history is told under the guise of personal experiences, that many of the individual names are names of tribes as well, that such an unpleasant story as that of Gen. xxxviii. is probably an account of the irregular marriages which members of the tribe of Judah contracted with the Canaanites of the Shephelah, and so on, he seems to minimize quite needlessly the actual importance of this historical core. It seems far more credible to see in Abraham a real historical figure than a creation of fancy. Archaeology shows the niche into which he can be fitted with great exactness. If it never does more than that, its service has been very great.

It is often urged that history affords no illustration of a nation having sprung from a single family. It is not, however, necessary to treat Abraham as the only physical ancestor of the Hebrews. Certainly, in the account of the circumcision in chapter xvii., all the

males in Abraham's household submitted to this ceremony, and are therefore to be counted among his descendants. The nation grew, like others, from an amalgamation of families; but the faith of the first great ancestor was the uniting bond that held them together. Illustrations have been given in recent years from the reports of the Turkish Bureau of Statistics, showing how small are some of the Bedouin tribes that wander in the region east of the Sea of Galilee, their average number being only two hundred souls.[1] For such a tribe accompanying Abraham there would be abundant room in Palestine. The existence of the Rechabites so many centuries later as a distinct tribe is an interesting illustration of such a possibility.

Let us now seek to restate the Bible records as to Abraham's call. Near the mouth of the Euphrates, now some miles west of the river in the desert, but formerly on the Persian Gulf, lay the city of Ur. To-day the ruins of the temple of Sin, the moon-god, rising seventy feet above the plain, bear witness to the ancient cult. On the upper reaches of the river, on the high-road from Babylon to the sea, lay Haran. Here also was a great temple of Sin, restored by Nabonidus in the 6th century B.C.[2] The family of Terah, which travelled from Ur to Haran on its way to Canaan, the customary caravan route, must have been well acquainted with the moon-worship. In the astral

[1] Cf. Kittel, *Die orientalischen Ausgrabungen*, p. 17.
[2] D.B. ii. p. 301.

worship of which we have spoken the moon took the highest point in the zodiac, and was accordingly honoured as first among the gods. As the measurer of time, by whom the yearly calendar was fixed, the moon was the symbol of law and order, as well as of the light that illuminated the darkness of the night. We have already quoted part of one of the great hymns to the moon. A few more lines may be given—

> As for thee, thy word lets truth and righteousness arise, so that men speak truth.
> As for thee, thy word is like the far heavens, the hidden deep, through which none can look.
> O lord, in heaven in lordship, on earth in rule, hast thou among the gods, thy brothers, no rivals.
> King of kings, supreme, against whose command none appears, to whom in godhead no god is equal.

We wait, as we read, for the man who can take the next step, and follow the stream of thought into the deep sea of truth.

Now, the Bible says that, at the very time when this religion was being severely tested, such a man came, and that his name was Abraham. It does not describe this earlier worship, because it is not interested in it; its design is to tell the story of the self-revelation of the one God, and to trace His purpose of redemption. But it tells us that to one man there came an unmistakable message. He felt the spirit of the Highest, and could not confound, nor doubt Him, nor deny. 'Stung by the splendour of a sudden thought,' he saw that there was one Supreme Being who was seeking

him, longing to enter into communion with him. Driven on by this new knowledge, he gathered all that he had and went forth to live the simpler life, to meet with his God, undistracted by city noises and temple rites. Through the after years of his life, faith strengthened into certainty. He was able to force his faith on others. His faith became the faith of influence, and in his family and tribe the knowledge was preserved until the hour struck that heralded the birth of the next great hero.

It must surely be admitted that there is nothing intrinsically improbable in this. Rather, to a believer in the divine control of human history, it bears the stamp of inevitable truth.

If it is urged that, in any case, the date of these chapters is many centuries later than the events they record, and that therefore they cannot be treated as first-rate historical authorities, we agree. But the marked sobriety of tone, so free from extravagances of representation, suggests that the writers were keeping within the limits of traditions handed down from generation to generation, national records preserved by the tenacious memory of the East.

Jeremias adds a number of instances in which the social customs correspond rather to the usages of the Hammurabi period than to those of later Israel. He remarks, for instance—

It is recorded in Gen. xxix. ff. that Jacob, during the lifetime of his wife, married her sister. In the later law

(Lev. xviii. 18) this is counted as incest. But the ancient Babylonian civil law permits such a marriage with two sisters at once. A legend-maker of later time would certainly, in the interest of the prevailing law, have avoided going back upon old legalized customs of this kind.[1]

This scholar's general verdict is of importance. He refuses to admit that the narratives can be tendency writings, and says that it would be easier for a twentieth-century scholar, versed in Oriental antiquities, to reproduce so exactly the conditions of the age of Hammurabi, than it would have been for an Israelite during the monarchy. He suggests that archaeology should remind Wellhausen of his own dictum, 'If the Israelitish tradition were only possible, it would be folly to prefer before it any other possibility.'[2]

It is true that it is urged that the religious ideas and practices enshrined in these chapters correspond to the state of Israel before the emergence of Amos and Hosea. A closer study hardly confirms. The simplicity of the worship of the patriarchs, without any temples or settled sanctuaries, the absence of ritual or of priests, the freedom of their approach to God and their intimacy with Him, the absence of definite theological ideas, all point back to a primitive period. This is put with much freshness in some comments made to Gressmann by Eichhorn, where it is shown that the representations of God in Genesis differ *toto caelo* from those of the whole Old Testament.

[1] *ATAO*, pp. 365–6. [2] Ibid. pp. 365–6.

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> The earth does not tremble when Jehovah appears; the tent does not become bright because of His face when He enters; man does not die when he sees the Godhead. Only in Genesis, never again elsewhere, is Jehovah described in so human a form. With Adam He walks through Paradise; at the flood He personally closes the ark; He smells with pleasure the fragrance of Noah's offering. With Abraham He is a guest, and strengthens Himself with a morning meal. With Jacob He strives and is overcome. One notes that there is breathing here an altogether different air than elsewhere in the Old Testament. These histories must have arisen in another circle, since a characteristic atmosphere rules in them which we learn to know here only. The difference between Genesis and e.g. the book of Exodus in this respect is so obvious that only a blind man can miss it.[1]

This is a long way from the supposed reflection of the conditions of life in the early monarchy. It is true that Gressmann goes on to argue for the Canaanitish origin of these narratives. We need not follow him there. The fact and its interpretation are two different things. But the fact is unmistakable. In admittedly the oldest part of Exodus the theophany is with thunder and cloud and the sound of a trumpet exceeding loud, while the people shrink in terror from the burning mount lest the LORD should break forth upon them (Exod. xix. 16-22, J. and E.). Why should the same writers or editors speak with so much more simplicity of the manifestation of God to the fathers

[1] Gressmann, *Der Ursprung der israelitisch-jüdischen Eschatologie*, p. 129 n.

unless they were limited by tradition? In an artificially constructed history the element of wonder would naturally increase as the times treated of grew more remote. Moreover, as Driver asks—

> Why, unless there had been positive historical recollections forbidding it to do so, did not Israelite tradition concentrate all the glory of founding the national Church and State upon Moses? If, in spite of the great national deliverance undoubtedly achieved by Moses, Israelite tradition nevertheless goes back beyond Moses, and finds in the patriarchs the first roots not only of the possession of the land, but also of the people's higher worship of God, this can only be reasonably accounted for by the assumption that memory had retained a hold of the actual course of events.[1]

Summing up, then, we conclude the Bible picture of Abraham is, in broad outline, intrinsically credible and historically required. Breaking right away from the gorgeous ritual that had oppressed his earlier years, he turned, as many a reformer has done since, to the simplest form of religion, resting on a faith won by conflict, needing no external supports. A long discipline of law was needed before his spiritual descendants could win through to the worship in the spirit. Lesser men must travel hard and painful roads before they can stand by the side of the men of genius and enter into the inheritance they have won. For Abraham the Promise—for us the Law and its humbling burden

[1] *Genesis*, p. xlvii.

before we can enter into rest. That is Paul's philosophy of history, and we can accept it with confidence.

Before there was an Israelitish nation and commonwealth, before there was a Mosaic law as the foundation for that commonwealth, there was formed between the heart of the Father in heaven and a solitary human heart, which sought God above nature, a covenant of personal intercourse, of fatherly disclosures and filial acts of confidence, which continued and was developed as a sacred tradition—first in a family of friends of God, and then in a nation growing out of the family; and that covenant was the germ of the religion of salvation for all the nations of the earth. That is the element of most certain truth in the biblical story of Abraham which the penetration of the Apostle discovers.[1]

[1] Beyschlag, *N. T. Theology*, quoted by Shaw, *Pauline Epistles*, p. 111.

CHAPTER III

EGYPT AND THE WORK OF MOSES

Early history of Egypt—The conquest of the Hyksos—Babylonian influences—The Tel El-Amarna tablets—The reformation of Amenophis IV (Khuenaten)—His monotheistic faith and its limitations—Israel in Egypt—Historicity of the story of Joseph—Cause of the oppression—Moses—Critical estimate of his work inadequate—Evidence from Amos, from J., from E.—All show faith in the one God lying far behind them—Second line of proof—The dwelling-places of God—Stade on this; cf. the Book of Jashar and Song of Deborah—Third line of proof—Burney on the origin of the attributes ascribed to Jehovah—All lines point back to and meet in Moses—Objections considered: (*a*) The bull-worship. Not inconsistent with our view. Burney's suggestion. (*b*) The Ark. Its real purpose and meaning—Conclusion—Moses taught the indissoluble unity between morality and religion. Sellin on this fact.

LEAVING Babylonia, the Bible history passes over to the other great ancient home of culture, to Egypt. The history of this country begins later than that of Babylonia. The date of Menes, the first historical king of Egypt, is variously given, from 4777 B.C. (Flinders Petrie) to 3400 B.C. (Breasted). Breasted, however, states that predynastic kings were

already flourishing in 4500 B.C. The founding of the temple of Bel at Nippur is placed from 7000–6000 B.C.

It lies beyond our scope to discuss the earlier religions of Egypt. What is of interest here is to note that about 1900–1800 B.C. Northern Egypt was overrun by hordes of foreigners from Canaan. After a period of anarchy, accompanied by much pillage and many cruel massacres, the Hyksos, the 'Shepherd kings,' established a dynasty which lasted till the 16th century B.C. The weight of authority seems to be against the suggestion that these Hyksos were themselves Semites, but doubtless there followed in their train crowds of Canaanites, bringing with them Semitic customs and beliefs which were for centuries to exercise a controlling influence over the whole life and thought of Egypt.

If, then, we possessed no other evidence, it would be extremely probable that the Babylonian modes of thought, which worked so powerfully in Palestine, became dominant in Egypt also. That this actually happened has been proved in the most striking manner by the great discoveries at El-Amarna, situated on the east bank of the Nile in Middle Egypt, made in 1888 and following years.

Egypt is still the land of promise for explorers. In its wonderfully dry climate, buried in its sand, tablets and parchments last uninjured for many centuries. The finding of the Logia, and more recently still of the Aramaic papyri at Elephantine, are fresh

in the memories of students. But the discovery of these crumbling wooden chests at El-Amarna, filled with clay tablets covered on both sides with writing, still remains unsurpassed in interest. When read, these tablets proved to be Egyptian state archives from the times of Amenophis III and IV (c. 1414–1365 B.C.). They contained many letters addressed to the king from Egyptian officials in Syria and Canaan, some from Asiatic kings, and some communications from the Egyptian Foreign Office. But the most astonishing fact is that all these tablets are written in the Semitic speech of Babylonia, which was accordingly in those days the universal language of diplomacy. Hence it follows that the older accounts of Babylonian occupation of all the habitable land up to the Mediterranean and the river of Egypt are strikingly confirmed. As has been said—

> Their influence extended to the minutest details of business and social life; their language and literature formed a liberal education for all the cultivated classes in Western Asia. . . . We are learning more clearly as each year of discovery goes by, that what the Grecians and Romans were to the world we still call 'ancient,' the Babylonians were to countries and peoples of an antiquity immeasurably more remote.[1]

Let us now proceed to ask whether in the records of these times we can trace any of the higher streams

[1] McCurdy, *History, Prophecy, and the Monuments*, vol. i. pp. 185–6 (quoted henceforth as HPM.).

of thought which ran through the Babylonian teaching. At once we are confronted by the strange figure of the 'heretic king,' Amenophis IV (1383–1365 B.C.). From the calm, grave faces of most of the Egyptian kings there looks out one with slanting forehead, flexible projecting mouth, strongly advancing chin, long, narrow neck, stamped as a foreigner, even if we did not know that his mother was no Egyptian.[1]

This king, rebelling against the worship of Amon, cultivated with great pomp by the priesthood of Thebes, declared that henceforth there was to be but one God in Egypt, omnipresent and omniscient, brooking no rival. To the generations of the past he had been revealed under the form of Ra, the sun-god; but Ra had been worshipped in ignorance, and confounded with gods who were no gods. For this divinity a name was found in Aten, 'the solar disc,' and the king himself adopted the name of Khuenaten, 'Spirit of the Sun,' repudiating the name of Amenophis. In his zeal for his new religion Amenophis began an iconoclastic campaign. The name of Amon was removed with hammer and chisel even from the inscriptions commemorating his forefathers, whilst a shrine of the new god was built at the very gates of Amon's ancient temple. It is interesting to compare with this the campaign of Josiah against the high places in Judah, seven hundred years later.

The immediate result was open rebellion on the

[1] See the figure in E. Bi. col. 1239.

part of both priests and people; and the king, leaving Thebes, carrying with him the state archives, built for himself a new city and palace, marked still by the mounds of El-Amarna. Here he reared a stately temple to his god, and taught the new 'doctrine,' as it was officially called, to his followers.

A few extracts will suffice to show how high this new teaching reached. Aten is hailed as the creator of all things,

> the far-off heavens, mankind, the animals and the birds; our eyes are strengthened by his beams, and when he reveals himself, all flowers grow and live; at his rising, the pastures bring forth, they are intoxicated before his face; all the cattle skip on their feet, and the birds in the marshes flutter with joy.

So again it is said of him—

> Thou hast created the earth according to thy pleasure, when thou wast alone, both all men and the cattle, great and small; all who walk upon the earth, those on high who fly with wings; the foreign lands of Syria and Cush, as well as the land of Egypt.

Sayce says of this teaching: 'For the first time in history, so far as we know, the doctrine was proclaimed that the Supreme Being was the God of all mankind.'[1]

As we try to estimate the religious value of such utterances, we come again to the same phenomenon which we found in Babylonia. Once more an earnest seeker after truth seems to stand on the very threshold.

[1] *Gifford Lectures*, pp. 94–9.

In his faith in a god who brooked the worship of no other by his side, he came near to the thought of 'the jealous God,' who must have all or none. If the thoughts of the first extract given above seem to be pantheistic, the same might be said of many of the biblical psalms. How was it that at the death of Amenophis the old faith reasserted itself, and all his work was undone? The answer is not doubtful. It was because his god was an abstraction, and not a person. As Marti has said—

In Egypt and Babylon monotheism is theory, in Israel strength and life. *There* it is the product of a speculating abstraction won through a fusion of the gods, *here* the experience of a higher Being, the inner realization of his moral and spiritual might; *there* the empty concept of monotheism, *here* the fullness of power and life which must indwell this faith, where it is a true faith.[1]

When we go deeper, and ask why Israel alone found such a faith, we are forced back upon the old answer. It was amongst this people that the spiritual genius was found that could pierce beneath the surface and find God. Israel became the chosen people because its great men showed a receptivity of divine truth which was never equalled in any other nation.

From this brief survey of Egyptian thought we turn to the Bible story which narrates how the descendants of Abraham, after living for an undefined period in Canaan, passed over into Egypt and settled

[1] *Das Dodekapropheton*, p. 149.

there. No event in the whole history of the people made a deeper mark on the thought of later generations than this. Critical scepticism as represented by Stade, and at present by Cheyne, has doubted whether Israel was ever in Egypt at all. On the one side the absence of any native Egyptian statement about the Hebrews, and on the other a presumed deep-lying corruption and confusion of the biblical text, are urged in support of these theories.

It is, however, hardly too much to say that such doubts would destroy almost all the history of antiquity. The argument from silence is proverbially dangerous. As Kittel points out, there is not a single statement in the old Egyptian monuments which can be unhesitatingly explained as referring to the immigration of the Hyksos. Yet no one can doubt this fact. And, he adds with great force—

> It is almost incredible that a people whose national sentiment was so developed, so almost arrogant, as was the case with the Hebrews, would have invented the fiction of a long-continued shameful bondage suffered by their forefathers. . . . It would betoken a high and more than normal deficiency of historical sense in the Israelite national character, if a purely mythical occurrence gave the keynote of the whole national life, and formed the starting-point of the entire circle of religious thought as early as the days of the first literary prophets.[1]

As in the case of Abraham, the historicity of the story of Joseph has been much discussed. A cautious

[1] *History of the Hebrews*, i. pp. 185–6.

and guarded statement of the case is given by Driver.[1] It is pointed out by him that the Egyptian colouring so often observed in Gen. xxxix. ff. is common to the two main sources into which criticism divides these chapters, and was therefore presumably present in the traditions on which these writers based their narratives. References are given to the works of Egyptologists, who have shown the entire credibility of the story as a whole. Driver therefore concludes that it is probable that there was an actual person Joseph, who underwent *substantially* the experiences recounted of him in Genesis, and who, having risen to power in Egypt, succeeded in obtaining for his fellow tribesmen a home in the pastoral land of Goshen. For our purpose this is quite sufficient. Popular imagination may have coloured or supplemented the historical traditions by reference to the conditions of later times. It is enough for us to know that the higher religious conceptions won by Abraham were being handed on from generation to generation, often obscured and almost forgotten, yet waiting for the man who could come and breathe new life into them, and by an appeal to the God of the fathers, inspire his people, and rouse them to united action.

The Bible narratives assert that such a man came in Moses. One may conjecture that in the reaction that followed the death of Amenophis IV, and the collapse of his attempted reformation, the Hebrew

[1] D.B. ii. Art. *Joseph.*

tribes, who also stood outside the priestly religion of Egypt, were singled out for harsh treatment and oppression. At any rate, we have once more the historical background which makes the oppression entirely comprehensible. More we can hardly expect.

To estimate justly the work and faith of Moses is the hardest task of biblical criticism to-day.

As we have seen in the introductory chapter, it must be frankly admitted that the Pentateuch contains masses of material from widely different ages. It is the abiding monument of biblical criticism that it has disentangled the various codes, and shown how they grew with the life of the nation. We have learnt to see that the constantly recurring words, 'And the Lord spake unto Moses,' are a formula corresponding to our own, 'Be it therefore enacted,' and were freely used by legislators who believed truly that they were heirs of the spirit of Moses, guided by the same God who had called him. But when we rise from this necessary study of details and try to look at the man who stands behind all these laws, very different pictures emerge. It is more generally recognized than ever before that we must admit that we have in Moses one of the great personalities who create human history. The critical school, which did so much to rediscover the personalities of the prophets,[1] is now feeling its way backwards to reconstruct the

[1] Cf. Duhm's epoch-making book on *The Theology of the Prophets.*

figure of Moses. But, in the main, it still entirely rejects the suggestions of the earlier chapters of this work. To it the God whom Moses proclaimed was first a national God, and afterwards the God of one country, Palestine. Instead of the outline we have sketched of the higher knowledge attained by the patriarchs, we must put the animistic ideas described by Robertson Smith in his *Religion of the Semites.* To look for an ethical monotheism earlier than the 8th century is an anachronism. All the crudities of the histories of the Book of Judges are appealed to in support of this position. Moses could not have enacted the Decalogue for the reason that image-worship of Jehovah was freely practised, without any consciousness of wrong, through the early centuries of the settlement in Canaan. Hence Amos is a greater name than Moses in the history of religion.

To meet such a position in detail is obviously impossible in a work of this scope. All that can be done is to outline the arguments which appear to show the inherent probability of the Bible's own view that Moses stood on an immensely higher pedestal, and to prove that there is no such gap between him and the writing prophets as is often assumed.

The scientific method of proof is to examine the presuppositions of the writings whose date is undoubted, and to try to understand what is their necessary background.

Starting, then, with Amos, the first, according to

critical opinion, of the writing prophets, it has often been pointed out that the force of his appeals lies in the relentless way in which he shows the real conclusions of ideas accepted by all his hearers. The great sentence in iii. 2, in which he strikes with the stroke of a hammer the national self-complacency, is an illustration of this. 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities.' It is obvious that the people knew that Jehovah had chosen them of His own free will. He might have chosen others, but did not. Hence to them He must have been far more than one God amongst many, tied to His own land. Even the people of Northern Israel in the days of Amos had a faith which in germ was monotheistic.

But we have far stronger evidence than this, just because it is so much earlier. Criticism has decided that the two great early sources of the Pentateuch, known as J. and E., the Jehovistic and Elohistic narratives, belong to the century before Amos; J., the earlier, being dated from 850–750 B.C. What religious beliefs do these narratives contain?

Let us start with the teaching of J. To him Jehovah is the God who created mankind and has ever since controlled its history. He is a God gracious and merciful (Gen. vi. 8, viii. 21, xviii. 23 ff., xxxi. 12), all-powerful and ever-present with His people (Gen. xxvi. 3, xxviii. 15, xxxix. 2). We are struck at once by the absence of national limitations. The writer

has not only grasped the idea of the one supreme God, but he also understands the unity of mankind.

In the same writer we find the story of the origin of sin, and with it of human suffering; we learn the power of temptation, and the consequences of yielding to it; we see the dark picture of the growth of wickedness in civilization, but are led to hope for ultimate victory through the loving-kindness of Jehovah.

Then we are shown the beginnings of the nation of Israel, and are taught that it has a mission in the world.

As to the message of E. we may quote the summary of one who was himself an honoured leader of the critical school.

> Israel's God is a being of wonderful majesty and exalted personality, with unlimited power. His purpose concerning the nation is unchanging. . . . In every important crisis of national history, Israel's God has shown this interest by direct action on Israel's behalf; but He has never hesitated to send punishment when Israel deserved the same . . . E.'s thought of sin is that of J.[1]

Hence we see that though the view of E. is more national, and reveals no interest in the world-thoughts of J., the same lofty ethical conception of the one

[1] For the division into the different sources, Driver or Bennett on *Genesis*, or Driver's Introduction, may be consulted. The extract above is from Harper's *Amos and Hosea*, pp. lxxxiii.–lxxxiv. An extremely valuable estimate of the sources may be found there. Harper's conclusions as to Moses are less positive than those of the present writer.

supreme God lies behind them both. It is necessary to emphasize the word *behind* both, since it is often claimed that this teaching about God does not belong to the original drafts of these documents, but has been added to them by writers inspired by the spirit of Amos and Hosea. One can only reply to that that it seems as impossible to edit this teaching out of J. and E. as it is to eliminate the miraculous from the earliest substratum of the Synoptic Gospels. It is woven into their very substance, and cannot be taken out without ruining the whole. If this be so, we are met by the dilemma—either J. and E. as a whole are later than Amos and Hosea, or ethical monotheism is earlier than those prophets. The first alternative being surely impossible, we are shut up to the second conclusion. But, then, where did this monotheism come from? Is there any resting-place for thought in the intervening centuries till we reach Moses? The time between Moses and the 9th century B.C. is far less than the interval between Augustine and Luther. How often in those dark centuries of the Middle Ages did it seem as though pure Christianity had altogether disappeared! Yet the stream was only running underground, and presently its fertilizing power was seen once more. We claim that the same phenomenon occurred in the history of Israel.

A second line of proof comes from the consideration of the teaching of the earliest sources as to the dwelling-place and modes of manifestation of Jehovah.

According to Stade there are three conceptions in the pre-prophetic religion. He dwells (1) at Sinai, (2) in the land of Canaan, (3) at the different sanctuaries of the land. Stade adds—

> That Jehovah dwells in heaven, i.e. in a glorious habitation uplifted above the earthly world and distinct from it, is quite unknown. Even when He appears on the clouds of heaven it is a question of a manifestation within the world. Amos is still so completely unacquainted with the dwelling of Jehovah in heaven that he makes sinners flee before Him into heaven (Amos ix. 2).[1]

Two admittedly ancient passages refute this view. In Joshua x. 12 is a quotation from the Book of Jashar, older certainly than J. or E. Yet here sun and moon obey the commands of Jehovah. In the Song of Deborah, sometimes styled the oldest monument of Hebrew literature, heaven and earth tremble at Jehovah's approach.[2] Everywhere Jehovah appears as lord over all the forces of nature. Such words as 'fire and hail, snow and vapour, stormy wind fulfilling His word,'[3] might have been written at any period of the history. That Jehovah should manifest Himself at specially sacred spots does not mean that He was limited to them. Long after His universal lordship was recognized by all, men went up to Jerusalem 'to see His face.' Side by side with the passage in Amos may be put the late Psalm cxxxix. It is not Amos

[1] Stade, *Biblische Theologie des A. T.* pp. 103–4.

[2] Judges v. 4.

[3] Ps. cxlviii. 8.

but the sinner who vainly thinks that there can be a place where God is not, or dreams that rocks or hills or watery depths can hide from Him. Again one asks: 'Where did this conception come from if it was so far beyond Moses?'

Mr. C. F. Burney has added another proof that is worthy of serious consideration. He points out that to the desert-dweller the forces of nature appear hostile and destructive, but to the agriculturist beneficent and gracious. Seeing, then, that primitive man ascribes all natural phenomena to supernatural agencies, we may judge from the attributes chiefly ascribed to the deity in what stage of life they were conceived. He proceeds—

> Now if we take note of the natural phenomena which were associated by early Israel with the activity of Jehovah, we shall find that they were those destructive agencies of nature the effects of which would naturally impress a nomadic people. Especially do we observe that Jehovah is connected with fire, regarded as a consuming and destructive element, and with the thunderstorm and earthquake.[1]

Many instances of this are given, and the conclusion drawn that we have here the impression made upon a race of nomads by the phenomena of the desert life, and that this conception passed with Israel into the settled life of Canaan. It is then argued that the fact that this conception survived the settlement, and escaped assimilation to the corrupt nature-worship of

[1] *Journal of Theological Studies*, April, 1908.

Canaan is due to the strong ethical element bound up with it.

Jehovah was introduced by Moses to Israel as a Being endowed with certain definite *moral* characteristics, and requiring the same kind of characteristics on the part of His people.[1]

The general indignation against those who wrought folly in Israel is another evidence that this moral element was present in the national consciousness, and could be appealed to on occasion.

Mr. Burney further quotes the Rechabites as witnesses to his contention that even in the sixth century there were those who clung to the old conception of Jehovah and His worship, and rejected the settled life of agriculturists because it appeared to them to be too closely bound up with the worship of the Canaanite Baalim.

Summing up these arguments, we claim that an examination of the admittedly earliest sources of the Old Testament reveals everywhere the faith in the one, supreme, holy God, demanding moral service from His subjects. Some of the lines point back to Moses, because we can find no reasonable starting-point for them later than him; others go right back to the desert period; for them all the only point of convergence we can find is in Moses. Such a position is not only consistent with a frank acceptance of the results of literary criticism, but it is demanded by them.

[1] *Journal of Theological Studies*, April, 1908, p. 329.

We have, however, still to deal with the main argument of the critical school that the low state of religion in Israel in the first centuries after the entrance into Canaan is a decisive proof of the impossibility of our position; and further, that images were freely used in the worship of Jehovah right through the early history of the monarchy.

We have preferred to defer any consideration of this because it appears to us to be deduced from a collection of exceptions rather than from a broad survey of the whole field, but we have certainly to face the fact that in the days of Amos the people of Northern Israel appear, without any qualms of conscience, to have worshipped Jehovah under the form of the golden bull. If so, it is asked, what becomes of the second commandment? Now, it might be replied that this commandment may be read as forbidding the making of the image of any god except Jehovah. Certainly that is a perverted exposition: but Christian exegesis, which at one time taught that every bishop must be married because St. Paul had said that a bishop must be the husband of one wife, could furnish many parallels. At any rate, Hosea despised these images, and one can never picture Elijah bowing himself down before them. But another suggestion has been revived by Burney in the article just quoted. It has now been proved that the sacred name Jehovah was known in Babylonia. It is also a puzzling fact, proved by the monuments, that there are references to Israel, as a

people dwelling in Canaan, some time before the Exodus. Mr. Burney supposes that these earliest settlers also called themselves the people of Jehovah, and hailed the invaders under Joshua as their brethren. But their worship of Jehovah lacked the moral earnestness of Moses, and was easily corrupted by the surrounding religions. Hence the Bible story is really that of a long-continued struggle between the higher and lower conceptions of Jehovah.[1] The band of prophets of Jehovah who professed to declare His will to Ahab may have belonged to this lower grade, as also Gideon with his demoralizing forms of worship. Doubtless this theory, plausible and attractive though it is, must pass through the fire of criticism before it can be accepted as probable, but, true or false, it shows how far we are from the end of possible explanations of these antinomies. The discussion of the passages which are supposed to show that image-worship was freely practised in the name of Jehovah until quite a late period, even by such ardent worshippers as David, is given in the next chapter.

Meanwhile we contend that in the biblical tradition about Moses there is not the slightest trace of his ever having represented his God in any material form. At

[1] On this, see also Gordon, *The Early Traditions of Genesis*, p. 187. Dr. Gordon thinks that such a theory fails to account for the common *esprit* and common traditions of the united nation. He thinks, however, that these *Habiri* of the monuments afterwards formed the tribe of Asher.

one time it was argued that the Ark was a materialistic symbol of Jehovah's presence, or that it contained some sacred image or fetish. But recent writers, following Babylonian parallels, have seen in it either a throne or a reminiscence of the object carried in Marduk's processions containing the 'tables of fate.'[1] It is extremely interesting to observe how close the last suggestion comes to the statement that the Ark contained the two tables of stone on which the Decalogue was written. In the law as given in Deuteronomy, Covenant and Decalogue are used as synonymous terms. Thus it is there stated: 'And He declared unto you His Covenant, which He commanded you to perform, even the ten commandments; and He wrote them upon two tables of stone.'[2] That is why the Ark is called the 'Ark of the Covenant,' just because it contained the Covenant. Dr. A. R. S. Kennedy concludes that there is no 'reason for rejecting the ancient tradition which the author of Deuteronomy found in his sources that the Ark contained the tables originally deposited there by Moses himself.'[3] Such a remark appears to be perfectly just.[4]

But if this be so, the Ark is really a most powerful witness to the absence of any image-worship in the

[1] Cf. *ATAO*, pp. 436, ff.

[2] Deut. iv. 13.

[3] D.B. i. 151.

[4] Some argue strongly that the Ark was really a throne, seat of an invisible deity who sat between the cherubim. This thought is not necessarily excluded by what we have said.

days of Moses. The armies of Israel marched behind it to battle as the Crusaders followed the Cross. But whatever superstitious notions may have gathered round it in the minds of the mass of the people, there is no valid reason for holding that to Moses it was more than the visible sacramental symbol of the divine Presence.

We maintain, then, that we have every right to trace the Decalogue, in its shorter, primitive form, back to Moses. That being so, we can estimate the greatness of his contribution to religion. The laws of the second table, at any rate from the fifth to the ninth, had existed long before him. No human community could endure without them. But Moses taught, once for all, the indissoluble union between morality and religion. Speaking of the Decalogue, Sellin says—

Its unique importance consists in this, that here, and only here, those moral commandments were grounded upon the first and second—the commandments to worship the one invisible God of the nation—and placed in line with the religious third and fourth commandments. By this, with a force which we can discern in no other ancient Eastern nation, the whole common social life of man was placed under the rule of the one divine Will, by this the separate moral commandments received an altogether new significance. Their violation is the violation of the one holy Will, the foundation of the whole national life; their pursuit is the putting into practice of the divine righteousness, love, and pity.[1]

[1] *Die A. T. Religion im Rahmen der andern altorientalischen*, pp. 22–3.

That this was the work of one divinely inspired man is no wonder.

Epoch-making religious ideas generally come upon the scene in full strength and purity; it is only in course of further development that these products of religious creative genius, or, better, of divine impulse, are corrupted and disfigured by the intrusion of vulgar human ideas and selfish interests.[1]

Many a time in the course of the history these great thoughts of Moses suffered eclipse, many a time they seemed to have vanished. But they were filled with the divine victorious energy which cannot fail nor be discouraged, and at last, proclaimed again with tremendous force by the eighth-century prophets, entered on a new career of conquest.

[1] Kautzsch, D.B. v. 632*a*.

CHAPTER IV

PALESTINE AND ITS INFLUENCES

Geographical and political position of Palestine—Incompleteness of first conquest—The religions of the Canaanites—Illustrations from Gezer—Dangers of syncretism—Ethical power of religion of Israel in resisting this—Deborah—Samuel—Alleged traces of image-worship in early Israel examined—The ephod—The teraphim—The manumission of slaves—'Beholding the face of Jehovah'—The case for image-worship in pure religion of Jehovah quite unproved—Further considerations in support—The structure of Solomon's Temple—His dedicatory ode as restored by criticism—Persistence of the true faith.

IN the Book of Deuteronomy the patriot author lavishes all his wealth of description on the land of Palestine. It is

a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths, springing forth in valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig-trees and pomegranates, a land of oil olives and honey. . . . A land which the Lord thy God careth for, the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.[1]

In many respects this land of promise was fitted to

[1] Deut. viii. 7–8, xi. 12.

be the scene of the great conflict between the religions of the flesh and the spirit. It lay between the two great seats of empire, Babylonia and Egypt, sufficiently apart from them to let its inhabitants develop their own individuality, and yet close enough for them to be saved from provincialism, as they watched the rise and fall of changing dynasties.

There is no land which is at once so much a sanctuary and an observatory as Palestine; no land which, till its office was fulfilled, was so swept by the great forces of history, and was yet so capable of preserving one tribe in national continuity and growth; one tribe learning and suffering and rising superior to the successive problems these forces presented to her, till upon the opportunity afforded by the last of them she launched with her results upon the world.[1]

It is needful for the Bible reader to grasp clearly how much of this land was left unconquered till the rise of the monarchy. The first reading of the Book of Joshua suggests that before his death all the land had been subdued—

So the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which He sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it and dwelt therein. And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that He sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand.[2]

But this peaceful picture has to be studied in the

[1] G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography*, p. 112.
[2] Joshua xxi. 43-4.

light cast by the records of the Book of Judges. In its first chapter we see the separate tribes, after Joshua's death, fighting to secure their territory, and compelled to leave many of the stronger Canaanitish cities unconquered.[1] In the sequel, not only did the maritime cities of Philistia and Phoenicia retain their independence, but a strong line of fortresses, Taanach, Megiddo, Bethshean, secured to the former inhabitants the richest inland plain, the valley of the Kishon. Further south, such strongholds as Shaalbim, Ajalon, Gezer, and Jebus shut off almost completely the tribes of Judah and Simeon from the rest of the Israelites. It is true that the punitive expedition of Rameses III into Palestine, which was almost contemporaneous with the Israelite passage of the Jordan, had greatly weakened the city-kings of the country, but nevertheless, the stronger towns were still able to bid defiance to the invaders. Convincing proof of the truth of this representation has been furnished by the excavations in Palestine, whence it is clear that the development of these Canaanite cities went on unbrokenly for nearly two centuries after the invasion.[2] One result of this is shown in the Song of Deborah. Such was the terror inspired by the lord of these fortresses that 'Caravans ceased, and those who travelled the roads went by roundabout paths,'[3] while

[1] Judges i. 21, 27, 29, &c.

[2] Cf. Vincent, *Canaan d'après l'Exploration recente*, p. 463.

[3] Judges v. 6, 7, R.V. m.

'the hamlets ceased,' i.e. the villagers deserted their homes to take refuge in the towns. The great victory of Deborah and Barak shattered the last attempt of the Canaanites to form a coalition against the Hebrew tribes. Certain cities, such as Gezer, which was non-Israelitish even in the days of Solomon, remained independent; but partly by peaceful amalgamation, and partly by conquest, the Hebrews now became masters of the land.

This brief survey is enough to show how real the danger was that the higher religion of Jehovah should lose its distinctive stamp as its adherents learnt to adopt the rites and usages of the older population. The explorations in Palestine have revealed far more than enough to justify abundantly the horror with which the Bible writers speak of 'the iniquity of the Amorites.' The work of the Palestine Exploration Fund at Gezer is perhaps the most striking illustration of this. Here, embedded in an earth-bank, which may have been the earthen altar of the High Place, were found a number of human skulls. In a bell-shaped pit just outside the temple precincts, apparently the receptacle into which the refuse from the sacrifices was cast, were found many bones of human beings, as well as of animals. Over the whole area of the Holy Place the earth was found to be a regular cemetery, in which the skeletons of young infants, never more than a week old, were buried. These are doubtless relics of the widespread custom of sacrificing

the first-born child. Moreover, the character of numerous images testifies that the dark stain of immorality, so often denounced by the prophets, and still to be seen outside the great temples of India to-day, defiled this worship also.[1]

Of quite extraordinary interest, as illustrating the tendency to combine with the worship of Jehovah customs and ideas from other religions, is the terra-cotta altar found at Taanach by Dr. Sellin, and called by him 'the altar of incense.' Taanach, in Northern Israel, close to Megiddo, has this advantage to the explorer over Gezer that it remained unoccupied for some 1500 years, 600 B.C.–900 A.D. Dr. Sellin suggests that it was destroyed by the Egyptians after the defeat and death of Josiah at Megiddo, 608 B.C. He fixes the date of this altar after the fall of Samaria, 722 B.C. It might be placed during Manasseh's long reign at Jerusalem. It is adorned with figures of animals with human heads, and lions whose fore-paws rest on the heads of the composite figures beneath them. The composite figures appear to represent the cherubim of the Bible, whose rôle is so much emphasized by Ezekiel. So far, the altar might have been used in the worship of Jehovah only. But besides these adornments one discerns what appears to be the body of a naked child, grasping with his two hands, as though to choke it, an enormous serpent. At the base of the altar is a tree guarded by two reclining

[1] See Macalister, *Bible Sidelights from the Mound of Gezer.*

horned animals, with heads turned towards its lowest branches. Dr. Sellin is of opinion that this altar belonged not to a temple, but to a private house. If so, we have an actual relic of the worship of an Israelite, touched by the heathen culture of his day, who held nominally to the worship of Jehovah, but made free use of Assyrian and other symbols of religion.[1]

As we ponder these things we are more and more impressed with the ethical power and conviction of the faith which overcame these influences, and blossomed out into the teaching of the great prophets. Sir W. M. Ramsay has shown how the introduction of Christianity into Asia Minor only broke for a moment the continuity of religious ideas there. The old religious feeling revived, and, step by step, conquered its new rival, and gradually destroyed the real quality of Christianity. The old local cults took on new and outwardly christianized forms; names were changed and outward appearances, and a show of Christian character was assumed. But the spirit of Paganism triumphed, and the worship of the Virgin Artemis of Ephesus revived in the worship of the Christian Mother of God.[2]

Similarly, Dr. S. J. Curtiss has shown how in Syria

[1] See *Palestine Exploration Fund*, Q.S. 1904, p. 390, or Vincent, op. cit. pp. 181 ff. (two admirable portraits and full discussion), or Sellin's own account in *Tell Ta 'annek*.

[2] 'The Worship of the Virgin Mary at Ephesus,' *Expositor*, June, 1905.

to-day, among Moslems, Christians, and even among the Jews,

the principle of ancient religion once found under the worship of the Baalim on high places and underneath green trees, still survives, and among the majority of Moslems, even in the great centres, is one of the most powerful forces of their lives.[1]

There must have been an unexampled force in the true religion of Jehovah to account for its victory. It is surely far more credible to think of the force of the pure faith of Moses refusing to be corrupted by these surroundings, than to imagine a gradual upward progress from this low nature-worship to the belief in the Holy One of Israel.

Deborah is a crowning illustration of this. In the time of the nation's deepest need and most complete dismemberment she rallied her countrymen, because the faith in the one supreme God lived on in her heart. She roused the people so that the dying spark burst out for a time into bright flame. And even though the fire seemed to die out again in darkness, it was never altogether quenched. Deborah's spirit is fierce and warlike, but it has the assured conviction which only a personal communion with God could have brought.

Passing on from the troublous times of the Judges, we meet the heroic personality of Samuel. Samuel appears as attendant at the sanctuary of Shiloh, hallowed by the presence of the sacred Ark. There is not the

[1] 'Survivals of Ancient Semitic Religion,' *Expositor*, June, 1905.

slightest reference here to any image-worship of Jehovah. The Ark alone is carried into battle. Had there been any image of Jehovah present, that surely would have been taken out also. If any image remained after the Ark was gone, the glory of the sanctuary would not have faded away so suddenly.

It is, however, urged that in the history that follows, in such passages as 1 Sam. xxi. 9, xxiii. 6, 9, xxx. 7, the '*Ephod*' was a portable image of Jehovah, used freely without sense of blame. Thus Kautzsch, with the utmost confidence, asserts that in these passages, as also in Judges viii. 27, xvii. 5, xviii. 14, 17, 18, 20, the ephod 'appears exclusively as an image of Jehovah.'[1] He further states that the attempt to explain away this meaning is 'shattered by a number of ancient passages about whose true meaning no doubt can arise.'[2]

The point is of such great and fundamental importance that the grounds of this assertion require serious examination. In the first place, it is admitted by all that in the priestly code, Exod. xxv. 7, &c., the ephod is the priestly waistcoat. A derivative word in Isa. xxx. 22, means the *casing* of gold with which images were covered, suggesting that the ephod was certainly, according to its root meaning, a covering or garment of some sort, something *thrown over* the wearer.[3] As

[1] D.B. v. 641*b*.

[2] Ibid. 642*a*.

[3] Kautzsch compares the German *Überwarf* or *Überzug*; cf. also the English '*cast*' used of a model.

a garment it was worn by Samuel (1 Sam. ii. 18) and by David. In the passages, however, where, according to our English versions, the priests are said to *wear*[1] the ephod (1 Sam. ii. 28, xiv. 3, xxii. 18), the word used never means *wear* anywhere else, but always to *carry* or *bear*, used of shields, weapons, burdens, &c. When, therefore, it is stated that Abiathar came down with an ephod in his hand (1 Sam. xxiii. 6), or that David said, 'Bring hither the ephod' (1 Sam. xxx. 7), or that Goliath's sword was taken from behind the ephod (1 Sam. xxi. 9), it is argued that some solid object must be meant.[2] This conclusion is greatly weakened, however, as soon as 1 Sam. ii. 28 is read in full. In its present form this verse reads: 'And did I choose him to be My priest, to go up unto mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before Me?' If the words 'before Me' are correct, the ephod is certainly not an image of Jehovah, for one could not carry an image of Jehovah before Him. If, as Budde and others claim, following the LXX, these words should be omitted, the case is not essentially weakened. The editor who added 'before Me' saw no difficulty obviously in using the word 'bear' in the sense of 'wear.' And in the emended text, which all the critics claim as a late passage, later than Deuteronomy, the use of 'ephod' as an image is impossible. Further,

[1] Heb. Nāsā.

[2] Wellhausen suggested that the 'linen ephod' was a garment, but that the word 'ephod' used by itself means an image; in the light of what follows this is seen to be a needless supposition.

in Deut. xxx. 10, the threefold functions of the tribe of Levi are sacrifice, the burning of incense, and the deciding of the law or direction of Jehovah. If this verse in Samuel is, as it seems, a parallel, then the 'wearing' of the ephod is parallel to the giving direction in the name of Jehovah. We come, therefore, to this conclusion: The Deuteronomic editor of 1 Sam. ii. 28 understood that the ephod, not an image, was used to give oracles, and saw no difficulty in the way of using the word 'bear' of a garment. Consequently we ought to interpret the passages where the ephod is used elsewhere in 1 Samuel to obtain oracles in the same sense. This saves us from supposing that in 2 Sam. vi. 14, undoubtedly an early passage, ephod is used in one sense, that of garment, whilst in all the other early passages it means an image—a very clumsy and improbable conclusion.

The use of the verb 'bear' remains still partially unexplained. It may, however, be suggested that 'to bear garments' is such an entirely natural figure that its use in any language is in no way surprising. Murray gives a good example in English: 'The good or the evil of monasteries lyeth not in y^e habite but in the men that *beare* it.'[1] It may be that we have in these few passages in Samuel a survival of a technical use of this idiom in Hebrew in respect of the wearing of the special priestly habit. If so, it is possible that a trace remains in a passage from the

[1] Dictionary, s.v. *bear*. Cf. φορέω, *wear*, from φέρω.

priestly code in Exod. xxviii. 29. In the description of the breastplate of judgement, part of the high-priestly ephod, we read: 'And Aaron shall *bear* the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgement upon his heart when he goeth into the holy place.' Similarly, in verse 30, 'shall *bear* the judgement of the children of Israel,' whilst in verse 38 the word is used of the golden diadem on Aaron's head. The word still used here of part of the ephod—in verse 29, of the rows of stones symbolizing the twelve tribes—may well have been employed in earlier days to describe the wearing of the priestly ephod generally. Seeing that the ephod was not a common garment, but one solemnly put on for a sacred purpose, the use of an unusual word is entirely natural.

Let us now consider the two narratives in Judges about Micah and Gideon, chapters xvii.–xviii. and viii., which are supposed to prove beyond a doubt that the ephod was an image.

In the story of Micah as it stands four sacred objects are named, ephod, teraphim, graven image, molten image. It is, however, claimed that two accounts are blended here, and that in the first ephod and teraphim are named, whilst the second mentions graven image and molten image. Dr. Moore, whose analysis we follow, argues strongly that the last word is an editorial addition. The word 'graven image' (pesel) is a general term for idol, 'molten image' (massekah) is a narrower term meaning an image cast

in metal. Dr. Moore thinks this word was added to explain to later readers that Micah's image was made of metal. If so we have the surprising result that ephod and teraphim in the first narrative are parallel to graven image in the second. The image corresponds to the teraphim. Then, presumably, the ephod was something else. That it was a priestly vestment used in consulting the teraphim is extremely probable. If, as the critical editors assert, the second and later narrative was written to throw contempt on the Northern Israelite sanctuary at Dan, its silence with regard to the ephod is understandable. The ephod, rightly used, was a legitimate adjunct to worship. The quarrel was not with that, but with the use of images. It is argued that at any rate Micah counted himself a worshipper of Jehovah, and saw no harm in the use of images. We do not deny that. But we claim that the condemnation passed on his conduct represents the view of the pure primitive teaching which from the very beginning was always present somewhere, and that at any rate his ephod was not an image.

Turning to the narrative of Gideon in Judges viii. we find it asserted definitely that here the ephod must have been an image, and that the statement that seventy pounds weight of gold was used in its manufacture, as well as the fact that it was 'set up' in Ophrah, proves this beyond doubt. If this passage stood alone we should probably have to accept this

conclusion, although even then we should observe that not only gold but also 'purple raiment' was used in the making.[1] But it is a serious matter to give to 'ephod' in this one place a meaning never demanded anywhere else. We know how rich priestly garments have often been. A garment heavily laden with gold, barbaric in its splendour, might well give a prestige to Gideon's sanctuary that might attract away the worshippers from the simpler shrines. Whether he, like Micah, used images as well remains uncertain. In all probability he did so, and merited the condemnation passed upon him.

In closing this discussion we are glad to quote the extremely important opinion of Benzinger, certainly one of the highest authorities on Hebrew archaeology. After pointing out that there is no mention made anywhere of sacrifices being offered before the ephod or blood brought to it, or prayers made before it, he adds—

According to the customary explanation the oracular ephod is a divine image. But in view of the linen ephod as the customary official garment of the priests, and of the costly ephod of the high-priest, nothing but altogether convincing reasons could justify an altogether different explanation of this third (oracular) ephod, especially since the high-priestly ephod is certainly no free invention of later days. The assumption of a similar form to the high-priestly ephod in the case of the oracle satisfies all the

[1] It is worth noting that the robe of the high-priestly ephod was of purple.—Exod. xxviii. 31, &c.

places where the old oracle-ephod is named, whereas the explanation by means of a divine image does not do this. To 'bear' divine images cannot be set down as the duty of the priests. The image of the god must not be carried about when and where it is needed, but one goes to it. . . . Finally, an ephod, together with the image of God (teraphim) and the pillar (mazzebah) belongs to the equipment of a public sanctuary (Hosea iii. 4; Judges xvii. 5).[1]

The passage just referred to in Hosea—'The children of Israel shall abide many days . . . without sacrifice, and without pillar, and without ephod or teraphim'—does not, as has often been said,[2] mean that Hosea approves the use of all these objects. The context makes it plain. The prophet's adulterous wife, in her enforced seclusion, will be deprived of the hire of her lovers in which she delighted before. So, in the coming Exile, will Israel be deprived of the false worship in which evil passion found such sinful pleasure. The ephod is not condemned in itself, only in its use with the idol images.

In the article previously quoted Kautzsch goes on to argue that in the use of '*teraphim*' we have traces of images of Jehovah. He regards the teraphim as a household god, and judges that in David's house (1 Sam. xix. 13–16) this must have been a representation of Jehovah. The fact that this image must

[1] *Hebräische Archäologie*, p. 347. It is noteworthy that Benzinger has changed his mind since the first edition of his book. See in that edition, p. 382, where he accepts the 'image' hypothesis.
[2] e.g. Robertson Smith, *Old Testament in Jewish Church*, p. 240.

almost certainly have been of human shape, so as to deceive Saul's messengers, whereas all the undoubted instances of images of Jehovah were in the shape of bulls, is strongly against this. An extremely interesting suggestion is made by Mr. Macalister.[1] Speaking of Rachel's theft of her father's teraphim (Gen. xxxi. 34, &c.) he says—

> If we may judge from specimens unearthed in considerable numbers at Gezer, the teraphim were small human figures, in which the parental functions were strongly emphasized, and it is probable that Rachel would look on such figures as powerful prophylactics or amulets for herself in the trial before her. Her statement as to her condition was in all probability no mere excuse, but perfectly true.

Mr. Macalister goes on to argue that the narrator has misunderstood the real meaning of the incident, but has unconsciously preserved the clue to it. He thinks this an argument for the extreme antiquity of the tradition. In David's case, therefore, we have the survival of an extremely ancient custom, to which his young wife, Michal, adhered. But it is quite plain that it was not an image of Jehovah. Later passages show that this remnant of superstition was afterwards banned (cf. 2 Kings xxiii. 24), and that the word 'teraphim' acquired a less limited meaning (cf. Ezek. xxi. 21), but we claim that there is nothing

[1] *Palestine Exploration Fund*, Q.S., 1905, p. 270. Cf. also Benzinger, op. cit. p. 329, who speaks of the 'teraphim' as images of Astarte, and compares with Istar the pitiful mother-goddess, the deliverer from curse and sickness.

anywhere to contradict our hypothesis that the pure primitive worship of Jehovah was imageless.

Kautzsch further claims that even in the Book of the Covenant (Exod. xxi. 6), there is a reference to an image of Jehovah. The passage reads—

> His master shall bring him unto God, and shall bring him to the door, or unto the door-post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever.

Kautzsch explains that this means that the slave was to be brought in front of the image of Jehovah, which he thinks stood inside the door of every pious Hebrew's house. This is forced and unnatural, the obvious explanation being that the ceremony was performed at the local sanctuary. This is well illustrated by the Code of Hammurabi, § 281, dealing with the case of stolen slaves—'If they are natives of another land, the buyer shall tell out *before God* the money he paid.' As Mr. Johns remarks on the usage in Babylonia, 'The temple was the chief scene of justice. Here men went to take their oath at the gate of the temple or before the censer.[1]' The LXX reading of the verse in Exodus—'shall bring him unto the judgement of God'—is therefore no softening down of the words in the interest of later orthodoxy, but an explanatory enlargement. The variation of the law in Deut. xv. 17, where the ceremony takes place at the

[1] D.B. v. 594*b*.

master's own house, is due no doubt to the abolition of the local sanctuaries. Many actions formerly done on sacred ground, as most notably the slaughtering of animals for food, were henceforth carried out privately. This is only one more instance.

To this list Kautzsch adds one more when he says that the fact that presenting one's self at the sanctuary is spoken of as 'beholding the face of Jehovah,' shows that originally men went to the shrine to look upon the image of the Deity. The reasoning here seems to be confused. The history of language shows that the meaning of words develops from the concrete to the abstract. It may be that 'to see the face of a deity' had at first in the history of religion a materialistic sense. But we have no proof whatever that this meaning was ever present in the pure worship of Jehovah. The theory already referred to, that the Ark, admittedly as old as Moses, was the throne of the God who sat invisible between the cherubim, is a strong witness on the other side. Further, that the writer (J.) who declares 'Thou canst not see My face: for man shall not see Me and live,'[1] could have meant when he wrote 'None shall appear before Me empty'[2]—or, as the critical editors amend it, 'None shall see My face empty'—'None shall look upon the face of the image of Jehovah empty,' is unthinkable.

Looking back over all these passages we are justified in asserting that the case for image-worship

[1] Exod. xxxiii. 20. [2] Exod. xxxiv. 20.

in the pure religion of Jehovah is entirely unproved. The way by which this conclusion has been reached has involved no special pleading. The difference between the method adopted and that of Kautzsch is that we have preferred to start from the broad historical tradition of Israel, and to examine the apparent exceptions in its light; whereas he has started from the exceptions, and tried to elevate them into a rule. And therefore in spite of the formidable list of names that may be quoted on the side of Kautzsch, whom we have selected as a typical instance, and as one of the most cautious and reverent of scholars, we are convinced that the days of this theory are numbered. All our results have been obtained with the help of a frank acknowledgement of the results of the literary analysis of the sources. In some respects we have incidentally found corroboration of those results. But we repeat that the acceptance of these results and their interpretation are two very different things. It must be added that to the present writer the defenders of this position seem to fail to appreciate the enormous gulf between the pure imageless worship of Jehovah and any form of image-worship. It would doubtless be replied that as the reality of the one supreme God became better apprehended, the need for any symbolic representation became less and less, and so, gradually, the use of images was entirely discontinued. This, however, does not account for the fierceness of the invective against the use of images in all the later

sources, nor the place of the second Commandment in the Decalogue, on any theory of its origin. The cultivated Hindu of to-day disdains the use of images as a necessity for his own religious education, but pleads for their retention as an aid to the common people. How marked the difference is between him and the Hebrew teachers! That the Israelite people as a whole were always ready to fall away to image-worship is shown doubtless by the eagerness with which they followed the lead of Jeroboam I, and gave themselves up to the abominations sanctioned at his shrines. Similarly, while Solomon's temple was imageless, the Ark being the symbol of the divine Presence, we have records how, even in Jerusalem, the people turned often to baser cults, as in the reign of Ahaz or in the adoration paid to the brazen serpent.[1] But the stern hostility of the representative men of Israel never ceased. We believe that the only satisfying explanation of this fact is that the knowledge of the one true invisible God was deeply burnt into the national conscience. Grasped by Abraham centuries ago, when he left the stately temples of his home with their gorgeous images, reaffirmed by Moses as the thunder rolled round Sinai, it was from the first one of the great foundation truths of the people that was to teach the world how to worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

The structure of Solomon's temple confirms this

[1] 2 Kings xvi. 11; xviii. 4.

result. It was built by foreign architects; its symbolism is full of Babylonian ideas. The brazen sea, the great pillars north and south of the entrance porch, the five candlesticks right and left of the oracle, even the threefold division of the temple corresponding to the threefold division of the universe,[1] are a few indications how many conceptions from outside were expressed in the building.[2] Yet in the heart of the shrine, in the Holy of Holies, in the thick darkness, there stood nothing but the ancient Ark; no other symbol of the Deity found its place there. Jehovah dwelt there; it was His house, but He was invisible. Solomon was only too ready to welcome foreign cults in his capital, but with regard to the God of Israel the purer tradition that came to him through his father from Samuel was too strong to be overpassed.

Criticism again bears witness in our favour by its analysis of 1 Kings viii. It is supposed that verses 12 and 13 contain, in a mutilated text, the dedication actually uttered by Solomon. With the help of the Greek version it is concluded that the author of 1 Kings quoted these words from the ancient Book of Jashar. As reconstructed by Cheyne they read—

> The sun hath Jehovah set in the heavens,
> He has resolved to dwell in thick darkness:
> I have built a lofty mansion for Thee,
> A place for Thee to dwell in for all ages.

Here, then, we have a plain belief expressed that

[1] Vide supra, p. 11. [2] Vide Benzinger, op. cit. pp. 329 ff.

Jehovah is the Creator of the universe, and a sense of the paradox involved in building a house for Him. Yet when the house is built the innermost depths of it must be shrouded in the blackest darkness. Jehovah deigns to dwell in the midst of His people, but no human eye may behold Him, or pierce the mystery which conceals Him from all mortal gaze. We find no explanation of so profound and wonderful a thought that does not reach right back to Moses.

Summarizing the results of this chapter, we see the purer faith surrounded, so soon as the people were settled in Palestine, by hostile and degrading influences. Numberless Canaanitish high places, with all their apparatus of pillars and asherahs, were simply taken over, and the local deity worshipped under the name of Jehovah. In many cases the tendency to syncretism overpowered the simpler teaching. Hence the Northern Kingdom at its fall lost its spiritual heritage, and bequeathed little to the generations that followed. But there was always a remnant of those who would not bow the knee to foreign influences, and who passed on the torch of faith. In succeeding chapters we are to trace how this faith was seized by the great prophets, amplified, expounded, preserved, until the blossoming time came and the Hope of Israel was realized.

BOOK II

ANTICIPATION



CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNINGS OF PROPHECY

Prophecy and the future—Anticipations in the earliest sources, J. and E.—The prophecy of Nathan—Background of the writing prophets—The day of Jehovah—Parallels in Babylonia, Egypt, &c.—Amos—Moral conditions at his appearance—His message of doom—His hope for the future—Hosea—Personal history—Period of anarchy in Israel—Two lines of hope: (1) The victory of love; (2) The future of the kingdom—Conclusion—Certainty of the permanence of God's kingdom.

THE value of the great prophets of Israel was for many years altogether obscured because they were interpreted only in the light of the future. Forgetting that they were amongst the most human of men, with passionate patriotic aspirations and warm personal affections, many readers studied their writings as though they were books of magic, giving in cryptic form all the details of the life of Jesus. Hence their books often become barren wastes of unintelligible words, relieved here and there by some oasis, some evangelic promise bringing comfort and refreshment.

To-day the pendulum has swung to the other

extreme, and they are often more valued as heralds of social reform, sometimes even as teachers of economics, than as 'statesmen in the kingdom of God,' preparing the way of the Lord.

If anything, this second position is more untenable than the first. As Dr. A. B. Davidson has said—

> If any prophetic book be examined . . . it will appear that the ethical and religious teaching is always secondary, and that the essential thing in the book is the prophet's outlook into the future.[1]

The task of the true expositor is to find a position which is, on the one hand, freed from the necessity of trying to force minute details into unnatural correspondences, but which, on the other hand, does not fail to show the magnificent sweep of the divine purpose fulfilling itself age after age in the history of Israel.

It is plain that such a position cannot be reached by any mere study of the history of the times in which the prophets lived. The argument of this book has constantly sought to show that none of the great men of the Bible can be truly seen, save in the light that comes from the past which lies behind him. It is because this fact has been so much forgotten that it has been possible to represent the earliest writing prophets as creators rather than restorers. We must therefore, before we can estimate the value of their several contributions to the hope of the future, try to realize the background from which they started, as

[1] D.B. iii. 119*a*.

expressed in the earlier literature and in the popular expectations.

Let us, then, as before, inquire as to the teaching of the oldest written sources, J. and E.

Starting with J. we find in Gen. iii. 15 the great promise called the *Protevangelium.* The writer has described the coming of sin into the world, and now goes on to speak of the resulting conflict between good and evil. It is surely wrong to say, as Wellhausen does, that in this writer we find 'a peculiar sombre earnestness, almost bordering on pessimism, as if mankind were groaning under some dreadful weight.'[1] It is far truer to say that, whilst deeply conscious of the fact of sin in human life, his faith enables him to look forward to the time when man shall triumph and stand upright with his heel upon temptation. That man must suffer in the fight, he knows only too well, but the issue of the contest is not doubtful.

Christian faith sees in this hope the promise of the Saviour, and sings—

> Rise, the woman's conquering Seed,
> Bruise in us the serpent's head.

or, again—

> O wisest love! that flesh and blood,
> Which did in Adam fail,
> Should strive afresh against the foe,
> Should strive and should prevail.

This is profoundly true, in that when the battle

[1] *History of Israel*, p. 314.

proved too hard for man, the victory was won for him by Christ Jesus. But we cannot claim that, when the words were first written, they contained this personal reference. It is enough for us that, in the pure faith of Israel, in this very early expression of it, there was this confident anticipation of man's victory over sin. Passing onwards, in the same writer we find the blessing of Abraham. Not only are his descendants to possess for ever the land of Canaan, but their prosperity is to be so great that 'through thee shall all the families of the earth bless themselves,' i.e. 'in blessing themselves will use thy name as a type of happiness.' In this translation of Gen. xii. 3 the opinion of most modern scholars has been followed that the more usual rendering, 'In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed,' cannot be justified. But, as Driver remarks, the words, as we have translated them, mean that the blessings of Abraham's posterity 'will attract the regard of all peoples, and awaken in them the longing to participate in them.'[1] Hence the essential teaching remains unaltered. The words reveal Israel's national consciousness that they were a specially chosen people, and show their faith in their own future.

Passing on further still, we come to the famous 'Shiloh' prophecy in Gen. xlix. 10. We cannot here discuss the difficulties of this passage. It seems certain, at any rate, that 'Shiloh' is not a personal

[1] *Genesis*, p. 145.

name. Perhaps the most probable interpretation of the verse is—

> The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,
> Nor the commander's staff from between his feet,
> Till he come whose right it is.

In that case the words look forward to the coming of an ideal ruler, in whose rule the sovereignty of Judah will be merged. If so the words find their best parallel in the expectations of Isaiah.

It is not needful for our purpose to quote passages from the other primitive source, the teaching being essentially the same. We may note, however, the triumphant assurance of the oracles of Balaam in Num. xxiii. and xxiv. Israel is a happy nation blessed by its God.

> I behold no misfortune in Jacob,
> I see no trouble in Israel;
> Jehovah his God is with him.[1]

Let it be observed that the sense of God's ethical requirements is not absent. In chapter xxv. stern penalties are inflicted on the sinful. But the general consciousness of special favour, of being a unique people, not to be counted with other nations, is strong and clear.

Passing to the Books of Samuel we find in 2 Sam. vii. Nathan's famous prophecy of the permanence of the Davidic dynasty. The point of

[1] Num. xxiii. 21, G. B. Gray's translation.

Nathan's promise is that it is not David who shall build a house for Jehovah, but Jehovah who shall build a house for David. The truth of the whole narrative seems self-evidencing. Kittel points out with much force that it is difficult to believe that anything short of a divine command would have hindered David from erecting a sanctuary for the sacred Ark, which he had brought with such solemnity to his new capital.[1] Granting this, there is no adequate ground for refusing to believe that the promise of an abiding kingdom was made at the same time. Israel under Saul had never been strong enough or united enough for the national self-consciousness to find such an expression as this. But now, with the Philistine terror removed, and the surrounding peoples humbled at David's feet, the hope was given of a line of kings standing at the head of Jehovah's people, related to Him as His own sons. When Northern Israel broke away from Judah to form a kingdom of its own this prophecy was forgotten. But it seems plain that it was known to Amos and Hosea, and that it formed the starting-point of Isaiah's glowing hopes.

Turning now to the prophets themselves, we find from their writings that amongst the mass of the people there was a widespread expectation of the coming of 'the day of Jehovah.' To this they looked forward as the time of their triumphant vindication and the destruction of their enemies. This is another of the

[1] *History of the Hebrews*, ii. p. 160.

popular ideas which Amos seizes to hurl back in their faces.

> Woe to you that desire the day of Jehovah!
> What have you to do with the day of Jehovah?
> It is darkness and not light . . .
> Storm-darkness, and not a ray of light upon it.[1]

Such words would be meaningless unless Amos were dealing with an altogether familiar hope.

Summing up, then, we find that in the time before the writing prophets the Israelites had an assured faith in their election to blessing, a bold confidence in their own continued prosperity, and an expectation of a manifestation of Jehovah which would bring ruin to all their foes. Behind this, almost or altogether forgotten, lay the deeper and quieter hope of man's victory over evil, whilst the thought of a continuous line of kings of the Davidic dynasty had already found expression.

It is of great interest to compare with this what we know of the hopes of other nations. That Israel should have believed in its own future is not strange. Many other ancient peoples, resting on the prowess of the gods they worshipped, have done the same. What is unique is that Israel believed itself to be the people of Jehovah through His own moral choice, and not because of any natural or local tie. He chose Abraham because He knew him, and was assured that he would teach his family to do justice and judgement.[2]

[1] Amos v. 18, G. A. Smith's translation.
[2] Gen. xviii. 19, J.

Similarly the expectation of a Deliverer, which we shall find so clearly expressed, is not peculiar to Israel. Dr. Oesterley has recently sought to show how the belief in a Saviour-Hero, or *Heilbringer*, who in the past won his victory over the watery power of darkness, the cruel primaeval monster, and in the future will again appear to bring lasting fertility and peace, is almost universal.[1]

So it has been said of the ancient Babylonian teaching, 'Its characteristic is the expectation of a Deliverer coming forth from the Godhead, who in the course of ages overcomes the powers of darkness.'[2] So again, Meyer, speaking of Egyptian anticipations, says—

> The fixed scheme is that a wise man proclaims the approach of heavy misfortune, the overthrow of all order, the conquest of Egypt through foreign peoples, &c.; then will follow the deliverance through a righteous king beloved of the gods, who restores order and civilization and inaugurates a long and prosperous reign.[3]

The righteous king is described as 'Shepherd of all men, who has no evil in his heart, and when his flock goes astray, spends the day in seeking it.'[4] This expectation was present in Egypt at the very time when the Hebrews were dwelling there. If this seems strange and startling, let it be remembered that the

[1] *The Evolution of the Messianic Idea.*

[2] *ATAO*, p. 5.

[3] Quoted in *ATAO*, p. 406, from *Die Israeliten und ihre Nachbarstämme.*

[4] Maspero, *New Light on Ancient Egypt*, p. 231.

need of some great Helper and the wistful longing for a brighter future is deeply rooted in human nature. If we can show that this longing comes from God, and that Jesus Christ satisfies desires that have sprung to birth in many races and in many centuries, we shall only have strengthened the claim that He is in truth the Saviour of the world.

Again, the thought of a coming world-catastrophe, where with fire and tempest and earthquake the present order of things must pass away, has now been shown to be extremely ancient. In countries which often felt the violence of the devastating forces of nature, such a fear could most naturally arise. In his work on the origin of the Israelitish eschatology, Gressmann argues with great force that this conception was well known long before the time of the prophets. Hence, as he points out, the claim of Stade and others that Zephaniah was the first to introduce the idea of a world-catastrophe is altogether improbable. Consequences of the greatest importance for the dating of certain portions of the prophetic writings follow from this. But in the meantime it is enough for us to note that the true prophets of Israel, seizing this conception also, and giving to it an ethical meaning, bound it up with the assertion of God's moral government of the universe, and made it serve the one great purpose of teaching their fellows to understand Him. Threats of coming ruin were no longer to be weapons for use against the heathen; rather were they meant to

be solemn warnings to all who broke the eternal laws of righteousness, especially to Israelites who knew those laws best.

We see, then, that the prophets had behind them two series of expectations—those belonging to the genuine faith of Israel, and those common to men of various races. It is our task to see how, as time passed on, they brought out of such conceptions the loftier truths that God revealed to them.

For the purposes of this book we start with Amos. There is much to be said still for the older view that Joel preceded Amos. But as this is so much disputed, and as Joel is not essential for the development of the argument, we have preferred to leave his little book out of the question.

Amos, the herdsman of Tekoa, appeared in Northern Israel at a time of national prosperity and complacency. The long-protracted Syrian wars were over, and the territory of Israel extended farther than it had done since the great days of Solomon. Israel was again mistress in her own land, supreme above the heathen tribes that surrounded her. Nor were the people slow to pay their dues to the God whom they claimed as their own. At the royal shrine at Bethel, before the golden bull-shaped image of Jehovah, a gorgeous ritual was celebrated. The worshippers were many and zealous. No shadow of doubt seems to have crossed their minds that the good fortune they enjoyed was due to the favour of Jehovah. Forgetting altogether

the strongly ethical requirements of their oldest code of laws, the Book of the Covenant, with its exaltation of pity and brotherly kindness, and its care for the poor and the distressed, they exhausted their religious sentiments in costly sacrifices and punctilious ritual. Meantime the poorer classes, upon whom the calamities of the past wars had fallen most heavily, found little satisfaction in the restored national glory. The smaller yeomen of Israel, whose farms had been overrun and ruined by the Syrian invaders, had been compelled to sell their patrimony, and were now landless and at the mercy of the capitalists. They were treated with a callous harshness which shows how entirely divorced from morality the religion of their oppressors was. Even the priests, bound by sacred duty to be the champions of the helpless, were corrupt and dissolute, allies of the brigands who robbed the pilgrims as they travelled to the shrines.[1] History has often been misread, but surely never more fatally than by those who claimed that the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, was pledged to defend a community such as this.

Upon such scenes the voice of Amos broke forth like a peal of thunder. He held, with unshaken faith, that all things in heaven and on earth are controlled by the one supreme God, Jehovah of Hosts. It is He who can darken day with night and shake the solid earth. It is He who has appointed to each nation its

[1] Amos iv. 4–5; v. 10–11 et passim; Hosea vi. 9, &c.

home, bringing the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir, even as He brought up Israel from Egypt.[1] And this God, whose voice has come to him, whose message he cannot but declare, is no abstract power, but a strong, living, holy Person, to whom every man and every nation[2] must answer for his doings, who must punish all inhumanity and wrong. Hence he draws the inevitable conclusion—Israel must perish, the state must be destroyed.[3] So soon as the moral tie which bound the people to its God had been broken, Israelites were no more to Jehovah than the Moors.[4] So, on the great feast day at Bethel, silencing with the strains of the funeral dirge the exultant songs of the priests, he declared, as though it were already an accomplished fact—

> Fallen, to rise no more,
> Is the virgin of Israel!
> Stretched on the ground she lies;
> None to uplift her.[5]

In vision he saw the hoped-for day of Jehovah as already come; but it had come with shattering violence and destroying force, and left the people buried beneath the ruins of their own temples.

What, then, of the hope for the future? Did Amos see beyond the gloom the dawning of a brighter day? As the book now stands he did. He saw that in the sieve of war and exile the true wheat was to be

[1] Amos iv. 13; ix. 7, &c. [2] Amos i., ii. passim.
[3] Amos vii. 7–9. [4] Amos ix. 7. [5] Amos v. 2.

winnowed out from the worthless rubbish in which it was hidden, and the nation, starting afresh, was to be crowned with divine favour.[1] Most modern scholars consider these verses to be a later addition. Dr. G. A. Smith, who calls these closing verses 'a very pleasant piece of music, as if the birds had come out after the thunderstorm, and the wet hills were glistening in the sunshine,'[2] concludes that they cannot be by Amos because

> all these prospects of the future restoration of Israel are absolutely without a moral feature. . . . To me it is impossible to hear the voice that cried, *Let justice roll on like waters and righteousness like a perennial stream*, in a peroration which is content to tell of mountains dripping with must, and of a people satisfied with vineyards and gardens.[3]

The argument is not decisive. To Amos the God who worked in history and in nature was one. To him fruitfulness meant the divine favour, which, in its turn, meant the reign of righteousness. Hence, while he could not see what the new society that was to grow from the ruins of the old would be like, and does not attempt to describe it, he may have seen, 'like distant mountains, misty and unreal in the golden light of evening, the miracle of God's mercy.' So he speaks of the restoration of the fallen hut of David, of the restored dominion of Judah, and the permanence of its kingdom, turning back to Nathan's prophecy.

[1] Amos ix. 8–15. [2] In loco, p. 193.
[3] Ibid. pp. 194–5.

But whether that was so or not, whether he died with clouded eyes or saw the promise and hailed it from afar, he has left behind him an imperishable monument, and remains for ever one of the grandest figures in human history.

We breathe another atmosphere as we open the Book of *Hosea*. In the years that followed the ministry of Amos, whilst his prophecies were unfulfilled and the prosperity of Israel still unshaken, there was being wrought out in an obscure home in Samaria a sordid tragedy which was to make the man who suffered most by it one of the great spiritual teachers of our race. We have learnt to read in the first three chapters of Hosea the story of the wreck of his own family happiness, of the awful desolation that came to him when he knew that the wife of his youth had proved faithless, the spiritual autobiography of the heart which, 'through the anguish of its outraged human love has won its way to the secret of the love divine.'[1]

In the chapters that follow, written after the death of Jeroboam II, we see the reflection of the terrible years of anarchy that went before the final downfall of the Northern Kingdom. Jeroboam's successor, Zechariah, was murdered after a six months' reign, it may be during the drunken revelry of his birthday feast.[2] In another month the usurper had himself been slain, and his adherents visited with terrible

[1] Findlay, *Books of the Prophets*, vol. i. p. 159, &c.
[2] Hosea vii. 3–7.

chastisements.[1] The new king only maintained his position by becoming tributary to Assyria. As has been said—

> For brief moments, when the darkness is torn by a lightning flash, we behold phantom kings, involving the nation in yet more hopeless misery by a useless policy of unprofitable alliances, and then the gloom closes in again, and we see no more ; but in the darkness we hear the clash of arms and shrieks of despair, while streams of blood tell their own story of another tragedy round the throne, which has once more been seized by an unscrupulous adventurer.[2]

Amidst these wild scenes, in the desolation of his own heart and home, Hosea moved and worked. We have to ask what were his hopes and anticipations of the future. In the first place, we cannot doubt that he, to whom the love of God was so much, who had learnt to see in his own unquenchable love for his sinful wife the dim reflection of God's everlasting love for His rebellious people, believed in the final victory of love. He saw how inevitable was the Exile, but yet believed that through the discipline of captivity, Israel would be purged from her sensuality and wickedness, and led back to the all-pitiful, all-holy God, who had in the days of old called the people out from Egypt. Hence the perfect passage—

> Therefore, lo! I am to woo her, and I shall bring her to the wilderness,
> And I will speak home to her heart.

[1] 2 Kings xv. 16.
[2] Edghill, *Evidential Value of Prophecy*, p. 59.

And from there I will give to her her vineyards,
And the Valley of Achor for a door of hope.
And there she shall answer Me as in the days of her youth,
And as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.[1]

So at the close of the book, where restored nature is to gladden the hearts of the penitent people turning back to God for healing and full satisfaction, the triumphant hope bursts through.[2] Hosea's conception of the love of God has no trace of weakness or sentimentality. He knew, if ever man did, 'how awful goodness is,' how all real love has in it a terrible element of sternness. But he could not believe that the age-long purpose of God's redeeming love had finally failed, and so, in the midst of the wreckage of home and state, he was comforted by visions of the brighter day.

It must be stated that many modern scholars reject all these passages, and consider that to Hosea the future offered no picture but that of unrelieved gloom. We cannot but think, however, that the reasons for such judgements are in many cases subjective and arbitrary. The frequent transitions of thought from threatenings of utter ruin to gleams of hope are far more true to his own self-revealed history and temperament than any steady consistency.

Indignation and sorrow, tenderness and severity, faith in the sovereignty of Jehovah's love, and a despairing sense

[1] Hosea ii. 14-15, G. A. Smith's translation.
[2] Hosea xiv.

of Israel's infidelity, are woven together in a sequence which has no logical plan, but is determined by the battle and alternate victory of contending emotions; and the swift transitions, the fragmentary unbalanced utterance, the half developed allusions, that make his prophecy so difficult to the commentator, express the agony of this inward conflict.[1]

Dr. G. A. Smith's opinion as to the epilogue in chapter xiv. is that he cannot 'conceive of the possibility of a stronger case for the genuineness of any passage of Scripture.' Dr. Cheyne, on the other hand, says that 'to have added anything to the stern warning of xiii. 16 would have robbed it of half its force.' Yet surely such a canon of judgement would compel us to cast aside in the same manner half the utterances of any truly human man who has looked steadily on life as it is.

The second point in Hosea's anticipations is his view of the future of the kingdom. He speaks with such fierce contempt of the man-made kings of Israel[2] that many have thought that he regards the institution of the kingship as wrong in itself, a fatal falling away from the divine ideal. Accordingly the passage 'Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek Jehovah their God and David their king,'[3] is rejected as spurious, and much later in date. But there is no adequate reason for this. The kings of Northern

[1] W. R. Smith, *Prophets of Israel*, p. 157.
[2] Hosea viii. 4.
[3] Hosea iii. 5.

Israel, with their bulls, of whom Hosea says scornfully, 'A workman made it, it is no god,'[1] will pass away unhonoured and unregretted. But, as Kittel says—

> If once Ephraim's worship of God, 'the calf of Bethel and Samaria,' were recognized as 'vanity,' a prophet's love of his fatherland could not hinder him from casting his eye towards Jerusalem and its Temple. Judah and Jerusalem appeared to him clothed in fresh splendour, and their House of David in its security, which defied the centuries, stood exalted high above the kingdom of Ephraim, which was slowly consuming itself.[2]

If the two pictures of the future hardly blend, in one case no king but Jehovah, His infinite compassion alone overshadowing and surrounding the land, in the other case the rightful dynasty again established in its power, we need not stumble at this. It is enough to say that 'the name of David is the historical symbol of a united Israel,' and to believe that now one and now the other ideal filled the plane of Hosea's vision.

These conclusions are much strengthened by the considerations of the first part of this chapter. If it is true, to quote Ed. Meyer again, that 'the scheme (of the prophetic preaching), including that of the Messianic future, is not something created by Amos or Isaiah, but a transmitted inheritance,' then we have an additional argument of great weight for the early

[1] Hosea viii. 6.
[2] *History of the Hebrews*, ii. 327–8.

date of these passages. It would have been more surprising if the prophets had ignored these popular conceptions altogether. Certainly it becomes almost impossible to maintain, as has often been done, that Isaiah created the figure of the Messianic king. We see once more the familiar phenomenon. The hopes and desires that spring from the needs of human nature are taken and expounded and made to carry the message of revelation. All these—

> August anticipations, symbols, types
> Of a dim splendour ever on before
> In that eternal circle life pursues,

were now beginning to declare their real meaning, pointing onwards to the coming brightness. This through all the centuries was the Witness of Israel.

If, now, we summarize the work of these two prophets, we find it in two main directions. (1) With startling clearness they expounded the real nature and claims of the God of Israel, whom Amos in particular showed to be the one supreme Ruler in heaven and on earth. Against all defiling and degrading influences, all lowering of Jehovah's worship to the level of that of Canaan, they strenuously protested. The righteous, holy, awful God, the God of infinite pity yet inflexible justice, is so revealed that we bow the head and worship as we read. (2) They carried on the hope that the knowledge of this one God was to be preserved in the people whom He had chosen, which should not finally pass away, but remain as His kingdom on

earth, and so prepared the path for the thought of the imperishable universal kingdom of God towards which we still are striving.

That was their place in the history of religion, and faith can hold with ever firmer assurance that they were inspired by the one great Spirit of Truth.

CHAPTER II

THE COMING OF THE ASSYRIANS

The call of Isaiah—Its significance—Outline of Isaiah's career—The coming of the Assyrians—Consequent widening of his horizon—Future hopes: (1) Kingdom with centre at Jerusalem; (2) Kingdom for a remnant only; (3) Established by the Messianic King—Authenticity of the Messianic passages—The mountain of the Lord's house—Micah of Moresheth-Gath—Contrast with Isaiah—Hatred of city life—Denunciation of Jerusalem—Hope for the future—The Deliverer from Bethlehem—The city made a garden-city—Relation between these prophecies and their fulfilment.

ABOUT the year 740 B.C., during the closing period of Hosea's ministry, there came to a young man at Jerusalem one of those experiences which have been epoch-making not only for their recipients but for humanity. *Isaiah* stood in the outer court of the temple, wrapt in thought, looking wistfully towards that holy place consecrated to the unseen presence of the God of Israel. All around him thronged the worshippers with their costly offerings, spreading forth their hands in prayer, claiming as their right the favour of their God. In his ears were the familiar sounds of the temple daily ritual.

Presently, as he gazed, all external sights and sounds seemed to pass away. A far-off strain of unearthly music filled the air. The veil seemed to lift, and in the holiest of all he saw the likeness of a kingly throne, with One sitting upon it whose train filled the temple. Around Him were the angel hosts singing in ceaseless adoration—

> Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts.
> All that fills the earth is His glory.[1]

At that sound the temple trembled, and, while the thick clouds of incense hid that glorious throne, a hopeless sense of unworthiness and helplessness filled the young man's soul. He saw as never before the sinfulness of his people, the careless nobles steeped in luxury, the court absorbed in gaiety and pleasure, the down-trodden and oppressed poor, the death of all true patriotism and willingness to serve, the reign of injustice. Deeper still he felt the shame of his own share in public wrong-doing, saw in that awful light the evil of his own heart, and prostrated himself in utter penitence. Then, purified and restored, he dared to answer the divine challenge and go forth as a prophet.

We have described at length this familiar scene because of its extreme importance in the history of Israelitish thought. The most radical criticism of the Book of Isaiah, as represented by Duhm, leaves this

[1] Isa. vi. 3.

chapter practically untouched. We stand here upon solid ground. But if such thoughts as these were possible only a few years after the time of Amos—such teaching about the lofty, unapproachable grandeur and holiness of the God of Israel—it is surely impossible to hold that till Amos came Jehovah was little more than a tribal God, one amongst many. Isaiah demands imperatively a far deeper background than this. His faith is the flower from seed-thoughts about God, and from experiences of His living Presence, which had never been wanting in the highest souls from the days of Abraham onwards.

It lies beyond the scope of this work to trace the course of Isaiah's forty years' ministry. He saw the recrudescence of Assyria as a military power, and the triumphant campaigns of her warrior kings, from Tiglath-Pileser III to Sennacherib. He saw the fulfilment of the prophecies of Amos, when Syria and Northern Israel, after vainly uniting themselves against Judah, were in turn overrun and destroyed by the all-conquering armies. He heralded, in words that sound like the tramp of marching hosts, the coming of the Assyrian into Palestine—

Behold, hastily, swiftly he cometh; there is no weary one nor straggler among them; none that slumbers, none that sleeps; the girdle of his loins is never loosed, nor the thong of his shoes torn: whose arrows are sharpened, and all his bows bent; his horses' hoofs accounted as flint, and his wheels like the whirlwind; a roar hath he like the

lion's, he roareth like the young lions, growling and catching the prey, and carrying it off, and none can deliver.[1]

He stood by the side of the faithless Ahaz and of the well-meaning but ineffective Hezekiah, bidding them put their trust in the omnipotent Jehovah. Shut up with Hezekiah 'like a bird in his royal city,' he watched Sennacherib's hosts laying waste the cities of Judah, and dared still to believe that Jerusalem would be saved. And at last he saw that haughty army, wasted by pestilence, retreat to its own land, and knew that God had fulfilled His promise. It was a life crowded with incident, in which he drank to the full the cup of human experience, in which he risked all and won all for his faith.

Our present task is to draw out the contribution which Isaiah made to the hope of the future, his share in that witness which Israel was always bearing to the coming glory.

Two thoughts lie at the base of Isaiah's hopes—that of the universal kingdom foreshadowed in Amos and Hosea, and that of the permanence of the House of David as expressed in the prophecy of Nathan. The history of his own time gave a new and expanded meaning to the first of these. The world that Amos saw was made up of a number of little kingdoms bordering Palestine. The judgement he foretold was to fall on Syria, Phoenicia, Edom, Ammon, and Moab. Beyond these peoples lay, it is true, Assyria and Egypt,

[1] Isa. v. 27–9.

but the thought of them hardly entered into his mind. Amos's prophecy of the fall of Israel was not due to superior political insight which revealed to him the certainty that Assyria had again a great part to play, it was the inspired deduction from his assured faith in the divine rule of righteousness. But Isaiah saw with his own eyes the attempt of the rulers of Nineveh to found a world-empire, saw people after people fall before their resistless onslaught, saw Judah itself a vassal state to Assyria, saw the day when the hill-fortress of Jerusalem with its temple was the only part of Palestine on which the invader's foot had not been set. Here, indeed, was a problem for faith! But Isaiah's faith never failed. Whilst Ahaz, dazzled by the brightness of the Assyrian victories, paid homage to their gods, and sought to conciliate the masters of the world by servile imitation of their customs, Isaiah claimed that all their power was given to them by Jehovah for His own wise purposes. Assyria was His tool, the rod of His anger.[1] For all its proud boasting and insolent violence it would some day have to answer to Him. Presently He would put His hook in its nose and His bridle into its lips, and drag captive the savage monster which for a season had been allowed to triumph.[2] Hence the facts of history which staggered others, shattering their trust in Jehovah, and leaving them at the mercy of all strange superstitions, only confirmed his first trust in the Holy One of Israel. In

[1] Isa. x. 5, &c. [2] Isa. xxxvii. 29.

the face of all denial, in hope believing against hope, he knew that God lived and reigned.

How, then, was this kingdom to be made manifest? It was to be revealed with its centre at Jerusalem. There were times when this belief seemed to be cast aside. Once Isaiah speaks of the day coming for Jerusalem when 'down to Sheol goes her pomp, and her tumult, and her uproar, and all that is jubilant in her';[1] and, again, of the time when 'the palace is forsaken, the tumult of the city is a solitude.'[2] But more and more as the years went on the conviction grew within him that Jerusalem, Jehovah's altar-hearth, must remain inviolable. This one spot on earth where Jehovah was truly worshipped, where His sacred shrine was standing, could not pass into the hands of His enemies. 'As little mother-birds hovering, so will Jehovah of hosts cover Jerusalem; He will cover and deliver it: He will pass over and preserve it.'[3] We know how this faith was vindicated when Sennacherib went home again and left the city uncaptured.

But, secondly, in this capital only the purged remnant of the people would remain. Isaiah, just as Amos, was assured that the day of Jehovah would bring no deliverance to any one just because he was an Israelite. To him Jehovah was the devouring fire, the everlasting burnings, purging away in His fiery trials all the impious, the blood-stained, the covetous

[1] Isa. v. 14.
[2] Isa. xxxii. 14.
[3] Isa. xxxi. 5.

and unjust.[1] But as he found a few in Jerusalem who received his message and followed his guidance, he saw in them the nucleus of the coming nation to whom Jehovah would be gracious, from whom no longer should their Teacher hide Himself, but 'thine eyes shall see thy Teacher, and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way; walk ye in it.'[2]

A purged remnant in a saved and restored Jerusalem—that was Isaiah's hope. How, then, could this come to pass? The answer brings to us Isaiah's greatest contribution to the hope of the future, his picture of the Messianic king. In the early years of his ministry, whilst the memory of the divine call was still fresh, he met Ahaz terrified at the joint invasion of Judah by the kings of Israel and Syria. Scornfully calling these rulers 'the two fag-ends of smoking logs,' all but burnt out, with no more power to hurt than a charred stick, he called on the descendant of David to trust in Jehovah alone. With hypocritical excuses the king put off the prophet, resolved already that in an Assyrian alliance alone lay any hope of deliverance. As Isaiah turned indignantly away there broke in upon his soul the great hope of a brighter future. In the near future should be born a Child whose glorious name should be Immanu-el—with us is God. In his youth he should suffer privations. In a land desolated by war he must live on the plain fare of a nomad, 'curds and honey shall he eat.'[3] But his presence

[1] Isa. xxxiii. 14, &c. [2] Isa. xxx. 19–21. [3] Isa. vii.

with the people should be the pledge of God's protection, all the plots of their enemies must fail.

> Rage, ye peoples, and be dumbfounded;
> And hearken, all distant parts of the earth:
> Gird yourselves, and be dumbfounded;
> Gird yourselves and be dumbfounded.
> Plan a plan that it may be destroyed;
> Declare your purpose that it may not stand:
> For—Immanu-el (with—us—is—God).[1]

It is much disputed whether the child Immanuel is the Messianic king, or only the type of the pious generation over whom that king should rule. If Immanuel is the king, then, as Kittel says, '*The hour in which Isaiah parted from Ahaz gave to the world the thought of the Messiah.*'[2] But we are left in no doubt as to the meaning of chapters ix. and xi. While the tumult of the captains dies away, and the blood-stained garments and weapons are fuel of fire, there comes the Hero-prince, whose name is 'Wondrous Counsellor, Hero-God, Father for ever, Prince of Peace.' He comes, a second David, endowed with all the fullness of the Spirit, to bring in a reign of righteousness and peace. At his coming the discords will cease, the peace of paradise will return, and while wrong and hurtful violence are rooted out, 'the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea.'[3] Of recent years a formidable number of scholars have denied these utterances to Isaiah, and sought to

[1] Isa. viii. 9-10; see Whitehouse, in loco.
[2] *History of the Hebrews*, ii. 346.
[3] Isa. xi. 1-9.

explain them as post-exilic. It is argued that the conceptions are too political, too little religious for the prophet of faith who despised all material aids; that they presuppose a time when no descendant of David was on the throne; that the references to the endowment of the Spirit and the peace of nature presuppose the writings of Ezekiel and the author of Isaiah xl.–lv., and so forth.

Paul Volz, one of the most thorough-going advocates of this position, claims that even if the prophets of this period had hopes for the future it would have destroyed the effect of their preaching to have declared them. 'The prophecy of the eighth and seventh centuries is not Israel's consoler, but its living conscience.' Further, whilst the hope of the Messianic king is admitted to be the direct consequence of the thought of the theocratic kingdom, he argues that this was the popular as opposed to the prophetic conception. The true prophet knew no king but Jehovah, and desired none. Hence this hope of the king was dragged into their teaching by the later prophets, an unfortunate inheritance from the unspiritual expectations of the people.[1] In his later work Dr. Cheyne is in substantial agreement with this.

But the answer is now plain. The hope in a coming king, just as the hope in a coming 'Day,' formed part of those deep-rooted human longings which, as we have seen, were present in many different

[1] Volz, *Die vorexilische Jahweprophetie und der Messias.*

peoples, and which contained truths which the future was bound to justify. Neither Isaiah, nor any other man of his period, could cut himself loose from his environment, and build a future altogether out of relation to the present. It was the task of the prophets to fill these thoughts with moral meaning, and use them to strengthen their own teaching. That the task of the King as presented in these chapters coincides with the twofold work to which Isaiah's life was consecrated—the deliverance of Judah from the Assyrian power which had destroyed Northern Israel, and the establishment of a pure civic and national life among the people of Jehovah—is a convincing proof that these passages come from him. He does not write as though David's throne was empty, and we know how loyally he worked with and served Hezekiah; but he looks away beyond these weak and spiritless kings, and dreams of the strong man who is to come, the man who in his Godlike force of character shall be 'as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.'[1] It is therefore possible to hold with the utmost confidence that this picture of the King to come formed the loftiest vision which Isaiah saw. It was the necessary completion of his earlier teaching about the inviolable city and the purged remnant. Its absence would have been far more astonishing than its presence.

[1] Isa. xxxii. 1–2.

To complete this brief sketch of Isaiah's hope one other passage must be referred to, the well-known prophecy of the mountain of the Lord's house in chapter ii. The fact that this prophecy, in somewhat altered form, occurs also in Micah iv. has given rise to almost interminable discussions as to its author. Without attempting to outline these, it must suffice to say that to the present writer the view advocated by Duhm seems the most probable. Duhm considers that this was the swan-song of the prophet, sung in his old age, not for the public, but for his disciples and the faithful few. That is a wonderfully attractive picture. Isaiah was no timid, shrinking spirit. The call to arms had in the past rang through his soul like the note of a trumpet; he had often spoken with fierce enthusiasm of warlike deeds.[1] But now he looks away to a peaceful future. Lifted, in blessing and prosperity, high above the nations, with the ancient promise fulfilled—'In thee shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves'—Israel draws to itself and its God the wondering homage of all peoples. The thought of the conversion of the heathen is not yet present. Its absence is one of the surest signs of the early date of the passage. But we cannot but marvel at the way in which, surrounded by so much that was discouraging and deadening in the external history, faith soared so high, and, as from the mountain-tops, hailed the coming dawn.

[1] Isa. xxx. 27 ff.; v. 26 ff.; xviii. 1 ff.; see Duhm, in loco.

Whilst Isaiah was doing his work in Jerusalem, another prophet, forming in many respects an exceedingly strange contrast to him, arose in the lowlands of Judah, near the country of the Philistines. *Micah* of Moresheth-Gath began his ministry whilst the crash of the fall of Samaria was still sounding in men's ears, and whilst the Assyrian armies were threatening to overrun Judah also. In none of the prophets does the fire of indignation against social wrong-doing burn more fiercely. Micah is a countryman, and to him the city is the home of all that is evil. There dwell the rich who suck the blood and tear and eat the flesh of the poor, who drive the small proprietor from his ancestral home and add his little farm to their great estates.[1] Micah, as has been pointed out, is in the line of those Old Testament writers who see no promise in the building of great towns, who make Cain the murderer the founder of the first city, who set forth the building of Babel as an act of impious rebellion against God, who show the patriarchs leaving Ur and Haran, cities of immemorial antiquity, to live in tents.[2] Hence, fully conscious of his own inspiration, declaring—

I am full of power by the Spirit of Jehovah
To declare to Jacob his transgressions, and to Israel his sin,[3]

he proclaims, 'Therefore shall Zion for your sake be

[1] Micah ii. and iii. passim.

[2] Gen. iv. 17; xi. 4, 31; xii. 4. See Kleinert, *Die Profeten Israels in sozialer Beziehung*, p. 63.

[3] Micah iii. 8.

plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest.'[1] To Isaiah the future was assured by the continued safety of Jerusalem; to Micah the inevitable justice of God made it certain that Jerusalem must fall. No more instructive warning to us to expect the fulfilment of prophecy not in the letter but in the spirit is to be found in the Old Testament than in these opposing views of Isaiah and Micah.

But had Micah, then, no hope for the future? A different spirit breathes through the last four chapters of the book that bears his name, and many assert that these sayings are post-exilic. So Cheyne says: 'In no part of chapters iv. to vii. can we venture to detect the hand of Micah';[2] and Marti arrives at the incredibly late period of the 2nd century B.C., long after, as we think, the prophetic canon had been closed, as the time of the final composition of the book. Nevertheless, Marti admits, speaking of chapter iv. verses 1-4, and chapter vi. verses 6-8—

> How admirably both these deep and high sayings suit as an addition to the book of the prophet, who had so pure and fine a sense for ethical obligations, need not be said.[3]

We may safely go further and ally ourselves with those who hold that, in the main, chapters iv. and v. are Micah's own work, and that chapters vi. and vii.,

[1] Micah iii. 12. [2] E. Bi. 3074.
[3] *Das Dodekapropheton*, p. 263.

though most likely written later—in the dark days of Manasseh—may well be the witness of his old age. If so, the book reflects one man's experience, first in the fiery heat of youth, then in the maturer faith of middle life, and lastly in the mellowed faith of old age, triumphant even when the sun was setting in violence and storm.

In the central section we find in chapter v. verses 2–9 the hope of the Deliverer. But this Deliverer was not to come from Jerusalem. The dynasty there had proved altogether unworthy of its place, and had been guilty of the cruel wrongs done to the people. So Micah turned back to think of David, the favourite of the people, a village lad and a shepherd, himself oppressed by a despotic court. Again he said there shall come one born among the people, a sharer in their burdens and their griefs, to be their peace and to shepherd his flock, to deliver the countryside from the cruel Assyrian. Could thought conceive a finer rallying cry for disheartened peasants than this?

But what of Jerusalem? After all, countryman though Micah was, the city was something to him. It was from there that Amos had heard the voice of Jehovah sounding out like the lion's roar over the threatened land. It was David's city, the seat of the Ark. There Isaiah had seen his glorious vision. Could it remain desolate for ever? We believe the answer is found in Micah's adaptation of Isaiah's prophecy of the mountain of the house. He made it his own, but

he added to it the words that speak of every man sitting under his vine and under his fig-tree. That is to say, the city is restored, but it has become a garden-city. As in later days, Zechariah dreamt of the day when 'Jerusalem shall be inhabited as villages without walls'[1]—i.e. as open country districts—when its only defence should be the protecting presence of Jehovah, so here. There are to be no more cities, because city and country are one; all the land is city, because there are safe and secure dwelling-places everywhere. It is only a variation on Isaiah's idyllic picture in chapter xi., a first sketch of the city on the banks of the river of life.

Looking back over the hopes which have been described in this chapter, we may so far anticipate the conclusion as to ask in what sense they have been fulfilled. To the outward eye they were not fulfilled in the least degree. Isaiah's hope of the Messianic age was rudely broken, if tradition be true, by a violent death. His own words have a tragic significance for himself: 'He looked for judgement, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry'[2]—a martyr's death-cry.

If Micah lived on to Manasseh's reign, he saw Jerusalem delivered from Sennacherib instead of being destroyed, saw the wrongs of the peasants intensified, listened in vain for the footsteps of the coming Saviour. Yet the work for which the prophets were appointed was

[1] Zech. ii. 4–5. [2] Isa. v. 7.

done. They took the Witness of Israel, handed down to them by their predecessors, deepened its meaning, taught new truths about the God from whom it came, and handed on the indestructible faith in His ultimate reign and in His final intervention to redeem mankind. The changing forms and expressions of their hopes do not invalidate this. As Dr. A. B. Davidson says, in his golden article on Prophecy, one of the richest of all his gifts to our generation—

> Just as some temple of God embodies and expresses spiritual conceptions, but is constructed out of materials at the architect's disposal in his own day, which materials decay, and in a later age have to be replaced by materials of that age, leaving, however, the spiritual ideas still visibly embodied; so the projections of one prophet, constructed out of the state of the world, and of the nations in his day, decay with the changes of the world, and have to be replaced by a later prophet with materials from the world of his day. . . . Prophecy is what the prophet in his age and circumstances and dispensation meant; fulfilment is the form in which his great religious conceptions will gain validity in other ages, in different circumstances, and under another dispensation. . . . Every prophet speaks of the perfection of the kingdom of God, looks for it, and constructs an ideal of it. We are still looking for it.[1]

Many to-day, in their anticipations of the future, are trying to show us what the perfect state will be. We are at least sure that it must be built large enough to enshrine the glowing thoughts of Isaiah and of Micah.

[1] D.B. iii. 126*b*.

CHAPTER III

THE AGE OF MANASSEH

Religious reaction under Manasseh—Persecution of adherents of Jehovah—Micah vi. and vii.—Composition of Deuteronomy—Contrast between Deuteronomy and earlier history—The place of sacrifice—Dr. Orr's explanation of these facts considered—Work of the authors of Deuteronomy—Their use of the name of Moses—Illustration from laws of Manu—Theory of the loss of the book—Kuenen and Orr on question of fraud—Dr. Orr's own views on the composition of the Pentateuch—Summary of teaching of Deuteronomy—Blending of prophetic and priestly streams.

WITH the passing away of Micah and Isaiah, we enter upon a period of religious reaction in which, to all outward appearance, the work of these prophets was undone, and their great hopes buried in oblivion. The long reign of Manasseh was probably, in its external relations, peaceful and prosperous till near its close. By becoming a vassal of Assyria, Manasseh was able to secure his kingdom from the danger of invasion. Towards the end of his reign he appears to have become involved in the revolt of the viceroy of Babylon, and to have been taken to Babylon to expiate his crime before his suzerain, Asshurbanipal.

That is the most probable explanation of the account of his captivity given in 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11–13.[1]

But whatever the political relations of Judah during this period may have been, there is no doubt that in religion it was a time when many foreign cults were welcomed, when even the temple of Jehovah became a pantheon. The worship of the host of heaven suggests the introduction of the astral religion of Assyria and Babylonia. The reference to Baal and the Asherah indicates the revival of Canaanitish practices with all their abominations. Darker traits still are revealed in the mention of dealings with familiar spirits and wizards, and of the burning of the king's son in the fire. When we read how 'Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another,'[2] it is plain that we have the record of religious persecution. Towards the close of Hezekiah's reign the adherents of the prophets had begun a reformation. Attempts had been made to destroy the sanctuaries where the worship of Jehovah had become so corrupted as hardly to be distinguishable from heathenism.[3] These efforts had been made in the teeth of popular prejudice, and the reformers had now to pay the price of their daring. Clearly the rigid adherence to the worship of Jehovah, with its stiff rejection of all compromise, formed the

[1] This is the view taken by Cheyne, E. Bi. 2926. Peake, in D.B. iii. 229, is more sceptical as to this narrative.

[2] 2 Kings xxi. 16.

[3] 2 Kings xviii. 4–22.

main obstacle to the assimilation of Judah to the surrounding nations. Hence a systematic effort was made to crush, once for all, so narrow a view of religion. It was a position to which many parallels may be found in history. One may almost say that here for the first time we see the inevitable result of the absoluteness of the claims of the Bible religion. Just as in later days the followers of Isis and of Mithra found toleration, whilst the Christians were hunted out and driven to the lions or the stake, because they alone could not consent to live and let live, so here. The one religion that could not be tolerated in the city which Jehovah had chosen to set His name there, was the pure and whole-hearted worship of Jehovah Himself!

Yet the true faith was not left without witness. As we have seen, it is probable that the closing chapters of the Book of *Micah* date from this reign. Their writer, whether Micah or another, does not doubt that the land is still Jehovah's. In words of almost unexampled grandeur, turning aside with loathing from the reeking altars and the murdered children laid as victims upon them, he declares the essence of religion: 'What doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?'[1] Then, after dark pictures of the commercial dishonesty, the cruelty, the shameless injustice and treachery of public life, he turns with inextinguishable hope to his God—

[1] Micah vi. 8.

But as for me I will look unto Jehovah,
I will wait for the God of my salvation:
My God will hear me.
Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy:
Though I be fallen, I rise again!
Though I sit in darkness, Jehovah is a light unto me.[1]

Through Israel's gloomiest hour the lamp of faith was still burning!

But we possess a far stronger proof than this of the persistence of the true religion in the Book of *Deuteronomy*, which in all probability was the product of this age. It is generally admitted that the book of the law found in the temple in the year 621 B.C., which resulted in the great reformation of Josiah, consisted of Deuteronomy, in whole or in part. So Dr. Orr concedes, 'There is no reason to doubt that the book which called forth this reformation embraced, if it did not entirely consist of, the Book of Deuteronomy.'[2] The question for criticism to decide is the time at which this book was composed. Now, when the laws contained in the J. and E. sections of the Pentateuch are compared with those of Deuteronomy, it becomes clear that the latter presuppose a far more developed state of society. The laws of the old Book of the Covenant, and the history contained in the earliest sections of the Pentateuch, are used as texts on which the authors base their exhortations. Declaring the fatherly care of Jehovah, who has led His people through the great and terrible wilderness, and given

[1] Micah vii. 7. [2] *Problem of the O. T.* p. 257.

them their home in a bounteous and fertile land, they show how the love of God, an all-absorbing sense of personal devotion to Him, is to be the primary spring of human action. All compromise with the idolatrous worship of Canaan, all use of the local places of worship or religious symbols, is sternly forbidden. At one place only is sacrificial worship to be offered to Jehovah; all other shrines, throughout the whole land, are to be ruthlessly destroyed.[1] It is here, as has been already indicated, that the main distinction between Deuteronomy and the earlier code appears. In the undoubtedly early records of 1 Samuel it seems a plain fact that there were many altars to Jehovah. Samuel sacrificed at Mizpah (vii. 9), built an altar at Ramah (vii. 17), sacrificed on the high place there (ix. 12), also at Gilgal (xi. 15), and at Bethlehem (xvi. 5). Similarly it is said of Saul in the early days of his loyalty, 'Saul built an altar unto Jehovah; the same was the first altar that he built unto Jehovah' (xiv. 35). So in chapter xx. verse 6 there is a most natural reference to the yearly sacrifice for Jesse's family at Bethlehem. All this time the chief priestly clan was at Nob. Even after the Ark had been taken to Jerusalem, Absalom obtained leave of absence to sacrifice to Jehovah at Hebron (2 Sam. xv. 7–12). Hence the conclusion has been widely drawn that the law of the central sanctuary as laid down in Deuteronomy was unknown in these times. It arose when

[1] See especially chap. xii.

the worship at these local shrines had become so degraded that there seemed no hope of reforming it. It was one of the most clearly marked providential stages in the purification of the popular idea of God.

Dr. Orr strenuously resists this conclusion, and should be carefully considered as the defender of an alternative view. He treats the instances just cited as *irregularities.* He appears to hold that Samuel knew the law of the central sanctuary. Thus he says: 'Samuel evidently knew something of it as long as Shiloh stood; for we read of no attempt *then* to go about the shrines sacrificing.'[1] This is a curious remark, seeing that the whole narrative of Samuel's life at Shiloh, except the general statement of chapter iii. verses 20–1, deals with his childhood. But the consequences of Dr. Orr's position must be observed. We must suppose that after the destruction of Shiloh a number of local sanctuaries were employed for the worship of Jehovah. Samuel recognized that this was irregular, but accepted it until a time of rest made a return to the older system possible. If this really took place, it is astonishing that we have not the slightest trace of such a change in the histories. Moreover, Dr. Orr even goes beyond the statement of an editor of the Book of Kings, who remarks: 'The people sacrificed in the high places, because there was no house built for the name of Jehovah until those days.'[2] According to this writer, worship at the high places was excusable

[1] *Problem of the O. T.* p. 178.

[2] 1 Kings iii. 2.

till the temple had been built. He, at any rate, has no thought that the law of the central sanctuary was in force till the fall of Shiloh!

In a similar manner Dr. Orr explains Elijah's lament over the breaking down of the altars of Jehovah in Northern Israel from the peculiar circumstances of that kingdom.[1] That can only mean that when, through the division of the kingdoms, Northern Israelites could no longer go up to Jerusalem, additional altars were devoted to the pure worship of Jehovah. Once more this is mere assumption. The only sanctuaries spoken of after the disruption are the semi-idolatrous ones at Bethel and Dan. That there were others, at which a purer worship was offered, we hold to be a safe deduction from Elijah's words. But that these were irregular, used only because of the political relations of the period, finds not the smallest support in the Bible narrative.

Looking back over the passages that have been quoted, we can come to no other conclusion than that the law of the central sanctuary was altogether unknown. Worship at the local sanctuaries is spoken of in terms that leave no doubt that this was altogether natural and normal. Dr. Orr claims that 'in no age were prophetically minded men the slaves of the mere letter of the law,'[2] and so defends the freedom of Samuel's action. That is true, especially, one thinks, of the

[1] *Problem of the O. T.* p. 180.
[2] Ibid. p. 179.

time before the full development of the law had taken place. But that Samuel could have disregarded so lightly the urgent and reiterated commands of Deuteronomy seems to us to be incredible.

If, then, we agree that Deuteronomy is of later date than the prophets whose work we have been considering, how are we to account for its origin? Let us picture the position of those who had been the sharers in Isaiah's hopes, but who were in Manasseh's reign compelled to watch the destruction of all that they held most dear. In spite of all, they never lost their faith in the future. In the darkest days they believed that God's kingdom could not be overthrown. So on the basis of the earlier sacred writings they composed this great book, and waited in confident hope that the time would come when it would be recognized as the law of the land.

To the modern Bible reader the main objection to this result is that the book appears to consist largely of speeches put into the mouth of Moses. He is disposed to ask why, if Moses did not utter these discourses, they should appear to make for themselves a claim which is not true. The real answer to that question is found in the difference between ancient and modern methods of authorship. In Dr. H. A. Harper's admirable exposition of Deuteronomy an extremely interesting illustration is given. 'Among the sacred books of the Hindus one of the most famous is the *Laws of Manu.* This is a collection of religious, moral,

and ceremonial laws much like the Book of Leviticus. It is generally admitted that it was not the work of any one man, but of a school of legal writers and lawgivers who lived at very various times, each of whom, with a clear conscience and as a matter of course, adapted the works of his predecessors to the need of his own day. And this practice, together with the belief in its legitimacy, survives to this day. In his *Early Law and Custom* (p. 161), Sir Henry Maine tells us that—

> A gentleman in a high official position in India has a native friend who has devoted his life to preparing a new Book of Manu. He does not, however, expect or care that it should be put in force by any agency so ignoble as a British-Indian Legislature, deriving its powers from an Act of Parliament not a century old. He waits till there arises a king in India who will serve God, and take the law from the new *Manu* when he sits in his court of justice.

There is here no question of fraud. This Indian gentleman considers that his book *is* the Book of Manu, and would be amazed if any one should question its identity because he has edited it; and he supposes that the king he looks for, if he should come in his day, would accept and act upon it as a divine authority. So strangely different are Eastern notions from those of the West. It is legitimate to suppose that *this* Eastern book originated in something of the same fashion.'[1] No more perfect illustration could be found. Working on the core of Mosaic teaching which they

[1] Exp. Bible, *Deuteronomy*, pp. 30-1.

possessed, the authors of Deuteronomy were led by the Spirit of God to write these glowing chapters. They used the name of Moses because his work was the source of theirs. Through them he being dead yet spoke, and the work for which his life was given was preserved. To learn that a book of the Bible was thus composed adds to the romance, but does not take away from the abiding value of the Scriptures.

But accepting this account of the origin of the book, we have to explain how it came to be lost and found again. Many critics, putting the age of the book considerably later than we have done, and supposing it to have been written just before it was found, have suggested that the story of its discovery was 'a pious fraud,' intended to invest it with a false halo of glory. Dr. Orr, again claiming that the most extreme views of certain critics are inevitably bound up with the acceptance of their more general findings, argues that this is the only consistent form of this theory of Deuteronomy. He quotes with approval the words of Kuenen, who, speaking of the supposed origin in the reign of Manasseh, says—

> This is open to the great, and in my opinion fatal, objection that it makes the actual reformation the work of those who had not planned it, but were blind tools in the service of the unknown projector. Analogy is against the supposition. And the rôle assigned to D. himself is almost equally improbable; for he is made to commit his aspirations to writing, urge their realization with intensest fervour—and leave the rest to chance! How much more

probable that he and other kindred spirits planned the means which should lead to the end they had in view![1]

But these rhetorical sentences do not seem to be at all 'fatal' to the view we have advocated. Writing when the persecution of the faithful worshippers of Jehovah was raging, the authors could only lay aside their completed work and pray for the day when it would be possible to produce it. It lay hidden in one of the many temple chambers, whilst its authors, it may well have been, went out to swell the number of the martyrs. Hilkiah and his allies were no 'blind tools.' Working towards the reformation of religion in the spirit of the traditions of Hezekiah's reign, they found a book in which all that they were aiming at was set forth in burning words, a book in which the note of divine authority rang out so clearly that no one could mistake it. It was to them a most joyful encouragement that such a book was found at just such a time. The writers of the book did not, as Kuenen says, 'leave the result to chance.' They left it rather to the providence of that God whose working they saw so clearly in the history of the past, and their faith was triumphantly vindicated. In the story of knowledge there are many names of those who have laid down the pen and died unhonoured and unrecognized, leaving it to posterity to crown their work. But there is no nobler illustration of such service than that of the unknown authors of Deuteronomy.

[1] Kuenen, *The Hexateuch*, E.T. pp. 219–20.

It is not possible for us, in this work, to enter more fully into the arguments for this dating of Deuteronomy. They must be sought in the many expositions of that book. But as at the present day Dr. Orr's book is sometimes said to have disposed of all these reasons, we add a few quotations in explanation of his own position. He says—

It is not necessarily implied . . . that Moses wrote all these laws, or any one of them with his own pen; or that they were all written down at one time; or that they underwent no subsequent changes in drafting or development; or that the collection of them was not a more or less gradual process; or that there may not have been smaller collections, such e.g. as that lying at the basis of the Law of Holiness—in circulation and use prior to the final collection, or codification, as we now have it.[1]

Similarly, with regard to the priestly sections—

The differences of vocabulary and style . . . give probability to the idea . . . of a *process* of composition, rather than of a single author.[2]

Again—

In the collation and preparation of the materials for this work (the Pentateuch) . . . many hands and minds may have co-operated, and may have continued to co-operate, after the master-mind was removed.[3]

We are a long way here from the old Rabbinic

[1] *Problem of the O. T.* p. 328.
[2] Ibid. p. 340.
[3] Ibid. p. 369.

notion of the Mosaic authorship of the whole Pentateuch save the last eight verses of Deuteronomy. If Dr. Orr were to try to separate the work of these 'many hands and minds,' he would himself be driven to use some such symbols as the J's, E's, P's, and R's, against which he protests so strongly.[1] Dr. Orr is concerned to maintain the essential Mosaicity of the Law of Israel. We claim that all that is needful for this is contained in the position we have defended.

> Deuteronomy [says Dr. Driver] may be described as the *prophetic reformulation, and adaptation to new needs, of an older legislation.* It is probable that there was a tradition, if not a written record, of a final legislative address delivered by Moses in the steppes of Moab : the plan followed by the author would rest upon a more obvious motive, if he thus worked upon a traditional basis.[2]

Seen in the light of the illustration we have used from the *Laws of Manu* that becomes perfectly clear, and enlarges our vision, in that it shows us one more of the divers manners in which God spake unto the fathers.

Turning back from this discussion, we have now to ask what contributions are made by Deuteronomy to the Witness of Israel. The old truths as to the One Holy God are reaffirmed with marvellous power. The moral claims of Jehovah are asserted and His indignation declared against all ignoble practices,

[1] *Problem of the O. T.* p. 205, &c.

[2] *Deuteronomy*, p. lxi.

whether personal[1] or social.[2] But, above all, proving themselves therein to be the spiritual heirs of Hosea, the writers declare the tender, compassionate, but yet inflexibly righteous love of God. This love is to be the ruling thought in the Israelite's life, and is to teach him to be pitiful and forbearing to others. With regard to heathen nations, the teaching is severe and uncompromising. The thought of their conversion is not present. We cannot see how it could be until the victory of Jehovah in His own land had been assured. With regard to the future, we miss the confident anticipations of Isaiah. The writers have always the dread before them that the sins of Israel will bring their destined punishment. Yet the fact that the book could be written at all is the surest witness to its authors' faith in the permanence of the kingdom of God. Their deep conviction is that God has entered into covenant relationships with His people. In later times this became one of the ruling thoughts of prophecy, and, as we shall see, culminated in the grand hope of the New Covenant.

One other comment on the teaching of Deuteronomy must be made here. In it we see two streams of teaching combining, the prophetic and the priestly. On the one hand, there is the careful provision for the due sacrificial worship at Jerusalem; on the other hand, there is the hope of the continual line of prophets, into whose mouths the words of Jehovah

[1] Deut. xxii. 5; xxiii. 19; xxiv. 4. [2] Deut. xxv. 16.

shall be put, the perpetual teachers of the people.[1] Hence, more perhaps than any other book of the Bible, Deuteronomy prepares the way for the perfect religion, where in united worship men find the inspiration which sends them out strong to toil in that service of humanity which is the service of God.

[1] Deut. xviii. 18.

CHAPTER IV

THE AGE OF JEREMIAH

The reign of Asshurbanipal—Beginning of the decadence of Assyria—The Scythian invasion and Median revolt—Zephaniah—The social conditions—The day of Jehovah—Hope of a pious remnant—The call of Jeremiah—His opening prophecies of doom—Lessons from his first disillusionment—Success of Josiah's reformation—Nahum on the fall of Nineveh—Defeat and death of Josiah at Megiddo—Habakkuk on the emergence of the Chaldeans—His victory of faith—Jeremiah renews his ministry—Prophecies with regard to the future: (1) Downfall of the state inevitable. (2) Restoration of the Davidic king. (3) The New Covenant. (4) Hope for the heathen nations—Conclusion.

WHILST the Book of Deuteronomy lay hidden in the Temple, and the voices of its writers had been silenced in death, prophecy was again 'aroused from its slumbers by the trumpet notes of the world's history.'[1] At the accession of Josiah, 639 B.C., the great empire of Assyria seemed to be at the zenith of its power. Its last great king, Asshurbanipal, was able to boast, 'during my reign, plenty abounded; during my years, abundance prevailed.' In many respects this king is the most attractive figure in

[1] Cornill.

the long line of Assyrian rulers. A great builder, he largely rebuilt Nineveh, adorning his new palace with battle scenes, hunting sculptures, and representations of animals that in freedom and vigour had never been surpassed. In the realm of literature, also, Asshurbanipal's name is held in grateful remembrance. In his great library, tens of thousands of clay tablets were gathered, containing the choicest treasures of the religious and scientific thought of his day. An army of scribes was busily engaged in copying and translating all that was most precious in the records of the past. The king himself was more than a mere idle patron of the arts and accomplishments of life. He tells us how he

> acquired the wisdom of Nabu, learned all the knowledge of writing of all the scribes, as many as they were, and learned how to shoot with the bow, to ride on horses and in chariots and to hold the reins.

Yet, whilst the capital was enjoying the brief renascence, there are no signs of that true colonizing power which alone can permanently hold together all the varied elements of an empire founded by conquest. Peace was maintained by force; whilst the subject peoples remained sullenly discontented, always waiting for an opportunity of asserting their freedom. Hence

> the great combination of communities was, strictly speaking, not an organism. It resembled one of those structures which are made up of pieces kept together by a keystone, whose natural tendency is to separate rather than unite,

and whose function is to keep the parts in place, and prevent disturbance by unrelaxing pressure exerted equally upon them all. A movement of any one of the elements brings the uncemented pile to ruins.[1]

The next generation was to witness this process, to see the complete break-up of Assyria, and to hear the crash of the downfall of Nineveh.

It is beyond the scope of this book to discuss the causes, internal and external, of this startlingly rapid downfall. The invasion of Western Asia by the wild Scythian horsemen, sweeping tumultuously on, and leaving devastation behind them, was doubtless one of these. Passing down the western plains of Palestine during the early years of Josiah's reign, they struck terror into the Hebrews, though we have no records of any assaults made upon Israelite cities. Seeing, however, that these raids were over at the latest by 620 B.C., they cannot have done more than give the first impulse towards disintegration. More important was the rise of the young and vigorous nationality of the Medes. The tribes that formed this nation had suffered many defeats from successive Assyrian rulers. Yet the consequence of this was to weld them into a people, which, driven on by hatred, was at last able to take vengeance on its oppressor and threaten Nineveh itself. When, after much hesitation, Nabopolassar of Babylon resolved to ally himself with the Medes and make common cause against Assyria, the doom

[1] McCurdy, *H.P.M.* § 809.

of the great empire was sealed. So complete was the destruction, that, only two centuries later, Xenophon passed close to the site of Nineveh without suspecting that he was marching over land where once had stood the metropolis of the world.

For the exposition of the moral causes which are the deepest interpretation of history, we must listen again to the voices of the prophets of the little hill-state of Judaea, as they test all human happenings by the standard of their faith.

Amongst those who witnessed the Scythian raids down the western coast-line of Palestine was a young man of royal blood, tracing back his ancestry to the good king Hezekiah.[1] *Zephaniah* was one who looked out far beyond Jerusalem. He saw Nineveh 'the joyous city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none else beside me.'[2] He saw the Philistine cities, and heard the contemptuous reviling of Moab and Ammon against the people and God of Israel. Looking nearer home he saw his own country filled with the heathen practices and observances of Manasseh's day, whilst the social wrongs of the poor were still flagrant. Princes and judges had forgotten their responsibilities, and were corrupt and evil. False prophets and profane priests disgraced their professions.[3] Hardened men of the world scoffed bitterly at all suggestions of an overruling Providence.[4] In Jerusalem

[1] Zeph. i. 1.
[2] Zeph. ii. 15.
[3] Zeph. iii. 3–5.
[4] Zeph. i. 12.

the cult of Baal and the worship of the host of heaven were carried on most openly, whilst some thought to better things by worshipping Baal and Jehovah at once.[1] As he looked there dawned upon him a terrifying vision of the future. 'The day of Jehovah' was near. It would break upon the world in darkness and gloom, in wrath and trouble and distress. 'That day of wrath, that dreadful day,' '*Dies Irae, Dies Illa,*' must bring ruin and desolation to all mankind.[2] Even proud and careless Nineveh must perish.[3] 'The whole earth shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy; for He shall make an end, yea, a terrible end of all them that dwell in the earth.'[4]

As has been previously pointed out, this thought of a great world-catastrophe had been familiar long before the days of Zephaniah. He is, however, perhaps the first to use it in the name of Jehovah, hence it may be said of him, 'His book is the first tingeing of prophecy with apocalypse: that is the moment which it supplies in the history of Israel's religion.'[5]

We have now to inquire what was Zephaniah's contribution to the hope of the future. We notice at once that he had no message as to the permanence of either king or city. The city of Jerusalem, defiant, polluted, oppressing, must fall, Woe to her![6] She had disobeyed all voices calling her back to her God, missed

[1] Zeph. i. 4–6.
[2] Zeph. i. 15–16.
[3] Zeph. ii. 13–14.
[4] Zeph. i. 18.
[5] G. A. Smith.
[6] Zeph. iii. 1.

the meaning of her chastisements, gone from unbelief and mistrust downwards to apostasy.[1] Nothing could save her now. Isaiah's belief in her inviolable security finds no place here. Similarly there is no mention of any king, no thought of a Messianic deliverer. All that the prophet can see is a meek and pious remnant who have outlived the storm, who trust wholly in their God, and, freed from all their ancient enemies, live in peace and felicity.[2] Over them Jehovah Himself will reign as King,[3] and will dwell in their midst, renewing to them His love and rejoicing in their obedience.[4]

The picture is very incomplete. It is strange that the prophet who was the first to see that Jehovah's judgement must be world-wide, has nothing to say about the world-wide expansion of his faith. We are, indeed, left altogether uncertain as to the relation between the saved Israel and other peoples. All that can be said is that his was not the task to see far into the future. Enough for him to declare his 'simple and austere gospel.' His predecessors had spoken gracious words of hope, promises to make the sins that were scarlet and red like crimson white as snow. The answer of the people to such offers of forgiveness had been the revolt under Manasseh. Now before the promise could

[1] Zeph. iii. 2—a pregnant verse!

[2] Zeph. ii. 3–15; iii. 12–17.

[3] Zeph. iii. 15.

[4] Zeph. iii. 16–17. It seems almost certain that at least the closing verses, 18 ff., belong to a later period. Perhaps all from verse 14 do so; but see Driver in *The Century Bible*.

be renewed the time of purging must come. Till the fundamental duties of religion had been learnt, earnestness and simplicity of life, humble trust in the God who 'morning by morning brings His judgement to light,' no further message could be given. Zephaniah passes away from our sight, of his subsequent career we know nothing. Yet often in the midst of the confusion and wrong of modern life one hears that indignant voice proclaiming, 'Silence for the Lord Jehovah.'

The years that followed Zephaniah's ministry witnessed the call and consecration to service of the greatest of all the prophets. Two and a half miles to the north-east of Jerusalem lay the village of Anathoth. 'It is the last village eastward, and from its site the land falls away in broken, barren hills to the north end of the Dead Sea.'[1] There, in the year 626 B.C., five years before the finding of the law-book, *Jeremiah* in early manhood heard the voice that called him from his quiet home and bade him go forth as God's champion. It was to Anathoth that David's priest Abiathar had been banished by Solomon,[2] and as Jeremiah was of priestly origin, it may be that he belonged to this family, which, as descended through Eli from Aaron, cherished some of the proudest memories of Israel's past. However that may be, there can be little doubt that from the first Jeremiah had been instructed in the pure faith of Jehovah. He lived and moved in the history of his people, and was by birth and nurture, as

[1] G. A. Smith, *HGHL*. p. 315. [2] 1 Kings ii. 26.

well as by vocation, predestined as the messenger of his God.

There is a striking contrast between the method of Jeremiah's call and that of his great predecessor Isaiah. Isaiah, the statesman, turned to the temple, and there with eyes unsealed looked upon the majesty of the Lord of Hosts. Jeremiah, the countryman, 'who looked on nature with the opened eye of the poet, and to whom every passing event was a parable,'[1] met with God as he walked alone. It was a morning in mid-winter, when all seemed dead and bare, when nature seemed to confirm the dread that Jehovah had forgotten His rule and forsaken the world which He had made Then suddenly, as he passed sadly on, he saw a tree without leaves laden with white blossoms.[2] Dr. Post writes of the almond-tree: 'As there are no leaves on the tree when the blossoms come out, the whole tree appears a mass of white.'[3] The Hebrew name for the almond means '*the waker*,' as it is the first tree to wake to life again from the sleep of winter. As the prophet stood gazing, a message from above flashed into his soul. The almond-tree is the sign of the mighty irresistible forces of nature, which never sleep, but only watch for the time when the glories of a new spring shall be revealed. Even so it is with God. He is awake, watching over His mighty words of promise and of threatening spoken so long ago. His purposes can

[1] Cornill, *Jeremia*, p. 8. [2] Jer. i. 11–12.
[3] D.B. i. s.v. *Almond*.

never fail. That hour made Jeremiah a prophet. It may have been on the same day that he learnt the first substance of his message. He saw on a fire a cauldron. The wood on which it rested had so tilted it up that its contents were on the point of boiling over and running towards the south. Again a message was flashed upon him. Out of the north, seething home of dark and little known tribes, whence the Scythians had poured forth, where the deadliest enemies of Israel lived, a scalding stream of judgement was to burst and overwhelm the doomed nation.[1] We cannot enter into the earlier verses of this chapter, where the prophet, pleading his youth and inexperience, felt the strengthening touch of God, and dared to accept His great commission. Enough to say that there is no passage in all literature which reveals so plainly how the divine calls come to those who are prepared for them. Jeremiah heard and saw, and 'was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.'

> He set his face against the blast,
>   His feet against the flinty shard,
> Till the hard service grew, at last,
>   Its own exceeding great reward.

In the long book that bears this prophet's name it is most probable that chapters i.–vi. contain the teaching of these earliest years. Starting with a perfect picture of the happiness and devotion of Israel's youth, when, in the love of her bridal days, she followed

[1] Jer. i. 13 ff.

Jehovah through the unsown lands of the desert, he goes on to describe her faithlessness and ingratitude with its evil and bitter consequences. At times echoes of earlier promises of forgiveness sound in his ears. He hears the voice of penitence and confession as Israel, turning away from the mad frenzy of the idolatrous worship on the mountain tops, returns to her true Saviour.[1] He even sees a future so rich in blessing that the heathen will own Jehovah as their God.[2] But soon this gleam of hope is lost in the dark thundercloud of judgement. The prophet shrinks in terror—

> My bowels, my bowels! Let me writhe! The walls of my heart! My heart moaneth within me! I cannot hold my peace! because my soul heareth the sound of the trumpet, the shout of battle. Destruction upon destruction is proclaimed; for the whole land is spoiled: suddenly are my tents spoiled, in a moment my curtains.[3]

Then came the end. In his youth Jeremiah had looked out from his home over the chaos of the hills going down to the Dead Sea. Now he saw in vision the whole land a chaos—

> I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was formless and empty. . . . I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heaven were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the garden-land was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down before Jehovah, even before His fierce anger.[4]

[1] Jer. iii. 23.
[2] Jer. iv. 2.
[3] Jer. iv. 19-21, Driver's translation.
[4] Jer. iv. 23-5.

So, finally, he declared that all his efforts to refine the people and purge away the dross had been in vain: 'In vain do they go on refining; for the evil are not separated. Rejected silver shall men call them, because Jehovah has rejected them.'[1]

We see, then, that the first message of Jeremiah ended on the note of hopeless doom. He had preached to all whom he met, 'I am weary with holding in; pour it out upon the children in the street, and upon the assembly of young men together.'[2] He had chastised with stinging words the impious worship, the immoral lives, the cruelty and injustice of the people. Through the streets of Jerusalem he had sought in vain for one good man.[3] Now with beating heart he waited for the fulfilment. There is nothing more dramatic in Hebrew history than the sequel. All his expectations were falsified. The Scythians went back and left Judah untouched. Under Josiah's lead the work of religious reformation was begun. Jeremiah returned to his native village to meet a plot against his life, to endure scorn and disgrace as a blasphemous fanatic who had spoken lies in the sacred name of Jehovah. His old distrust of his mission returned. The poignant words of chapter xx. verse 7 reflect his experience now, even if they do not belong to this period: 'O Jehovah, Thou hast beguiled me, and I let myself be beguiled: Thou art stronger than I, and hast

[1] Jer. vi. 29-30. [2] Jer. vi. 11.
[3] Jer. v. 1.

prevailed: I am become a laughing-stock all the day, every one mocketh me.'

So far as we can follow the uncertain course of his life, it was years before Jeremiah took up his ministry again. Yet it was in those years that those truths were burnt into his soul which in later days he was to proclaim, and by declaring them to win the victory of faith.

Two thoughts are suggested here which are worth consideration—

(*a*) We learn that even the greatest of the prophets were not inspired to read the future like the pages of a book. Jeremiah's task in these years was to awake the conscience of the people. We cannot doubt that in some cases he succeeded. It may well be that some of those who carried out Josiah's great reforms were roused to action by the words of the prophet. His intense conviction that the end was so near was mistaken. Yet it gave his message an intensity and force which it could not have found in any other way. The spirit was everything, the outward form mattered little.

(*b*) Jeremiah's ministry is a warning against the too facile conclusion drawn by some biblical scholars, that all the genuine writings of any one prophet must conform to the same type of thought. How easy to have argued, if we did not possess his later teaching, that every word that speaks of a brighter future must be a later addition! Rather let us learn that the life-utterances of every true prophet, as of every real

teacher, are likely to be as varied as human nature itself.

Whilst the passionate voice of Jeremiah died away into silence, the brilliant success of Josiah's reforming work appeared to contradict all these gloomy anticipations. The long-forgotten law-book was found in 621, and gave the stimulus to the vigorous crusade of the young king against all corruptions of the pure worship of Jehovah. The old high places were now authoritatively declared to be unlawful, and their priests brought in to fill subordinate places in the temple at Jerusalem. The long list of heathenish symbols and practices in 2 Kings xxiii. 4–15 shows how far the worship of Assyria and the older beliefs of the pre-Israelitish inhabitants of Canaan had asserted themselves in Manasseh's reign. None the less, there is a perfectly clear distinction between the idolatrous priests who conducted the worship of Baal and of the astral deities (verse 5), and the Levitical priests of the high places (verse 9), who were priests of Jehovah, though the altars at which they had previously officiated were now desecrated.

For the remaining thirteen years of Josiah's reign (621–608), all the power of the court was exerted to enforce the legal form of worship, and to stamp out idolatry. Left alone by the dying empire of Assyria, Josiah was master in his own kingdom, and with noble loyalty sought, with heart and soul and might, to fashion his people after the divine pattern.

There is no more striking illustration in history of the impotence of laws which do not command the moral assent of those who have to obey them. On the one hand, the people, resentful against the destruction of their ancient liberties and superstitious observances, only waited an opportunity to fall back into the old ruts. On the other hand, in court circles

The reformation produced, as Jeremiah seems to have expected almost from the beginning, a generation of thorough-paced pharisees; the type of zealotry which brought destruction on Jerusalem in the first century of our era was in full operation at its overthrow in the sixth century before Christ.[1]

This, in all probability, explains the silence of Jeremiah during this period of reform. He could not oppose a king whose character he so much admired. Yet he could not join with any heart in a work that was foredoomed to failure. One may picture these two young men with their contrasted lives. One in his quiet village home, mistrusting his call, eating the bitter fruit of disillusionment, had to wait until the hard discipline had broken up his fallow ground, and he was fit for further service. The other at the head of the state, without doubt or hesitation, was eagerly pressing on his work of reformation. Both were God's servants, types of those who may be found in almost every century. Some at the heads of armies and triumphant movements of thought, others on the

[1] Findlay, *Books of the Prophets*, vol. iii. p. 171.

sterner battlefields of their own hearts, have won the victories of righteousness and truth. We are debtors to them all.

Prophecy during these years is represented by *Nahum's* fierce and exultant paean over falling Nineveh. Nothing in the Old Testament is more stirring than his descriptions of the siege—

> Woe to the City of Blood,
> All of her guile, robbery-full, ceaseless rapine.
> Hark the whip,
> And the rumbling of the wheel,
> And horses galloping,
> And the rattling dance of the chariot!
> Cavalry at the charge, and flash of sabres,
> And lightning of lances,
> Mass of slain and weight of corpses,
> Endless dead bodies—
> They stumble on their dead.[1]

Doubtless this ardent spirit was an admiring follower of the root-and-branch policy of Josiah. He saw Nineveh overthrown by the righteous judgement of Jehovah, condemned for cruelty and idolatry, while the oppressed nations witness gladly her utter shame and ruin. Over against her rises the picture of Judah, calm and trustful in Him who is a stronghold in the day of trouble, happy in the message: 'Keep thy feasts, perform thy vows; for the wicked one shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off.'[2]

Nahum must have been one more of those Old-

[1] Nahum iii. 1–3, G. A. Smith's translation.

[2] Nahum i. 15.

Testament prophets who had to face the contradiction between faith and actual happenings. It cannot have been many months after he uttered these words when the tragedy of Josiah's death blasted all his hopes. Whilst Nineveh was in her death-throes, Pharaoh-Necho, king of Egypt, marched northwards to make his bid for the empire of the world. Disdaining this insolent foe, who dared to set his foot upon the land of Jehovah, Josiah offered battle on the fateful field of Megiddo. We cannot mourn his death. Better far for him to die there, fighting bravely for his country, than to have to go back to witness the complete reversal of his hopes. He had played his part manfully, and left an influence behind him that never ceased. But the task of carrying on the true Witness of Israel called for stronger hands than his—the hands of one who had prayed for death, and, it may be, envied Josiah's heroic end, but who, at Anathoth, was learning fast

> That life is not as idle ore,
> But iron dug from central gloom,
> And heated hot with burning fears,
> And dipped in baths of hissing tears,
> And battered with the shocks of doom,
> To shape and use.

Before returning to Jeremiah it is needful, however, to listen to one more prophetic voice, that of *Habakkuk*. For a year or two after Josiah's death Judah lay under the domination of Egypt, and in the reaction that followed much of the reformation was undone; whilst heathenism and social wrongs once more made life in

Jerusalem all but intolerable to the faithful few. Meanwhile, Nineveh had fallen, and at the battle of Carchemish, in 605 B.C., the pretensions of Egypt received their deathblow. The young Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon now had the world at his feet. The tyrant Assyria had passed away as Nahum had said, but in her place another tyrant had arisen, and Judah's lot was no better than before.

It was at this time that Habakkuk's message was given. It is not possible to enter into the intricate critical questions that make the exposition of this little book so hard. Such a discussion must be sought elsewhere. Meanwhile, it must suffice to say that to the present writer none of the proposed reconstructions seem in the least satisfactory, and the more ordinary view has been taken.[1]

In the dark days of moral and social disorder that ensued on Josiah's death, a prophet raised the old familiar problem as to the silence of God. How could a pure and holy God tolerate all this evil? As an answer he is bidden to look away to the north. There, strange and incredible as it may seem, God is Himself mustering an avenging host. The prophet shall not have long to wait; in his own days he shall see the Chaldeans coming in God's name to chastise evil.[2]

[1] For a full discussion, see Peake, *Problem of Suffering in the O. T.* Peake cuts the knot by putting much of the book in post-exilic times. A. B. Davidson, in *C.B.*, and Findlay, *Books of the Prophets*, give admirable defences of the position adopted here.

[2] Hab. i. 6–9.

For the time, this answer suffices. Then, as the Chaldean victories are won, and tidings are brought of the violence and destructiveness of the new conquerors, the old doubts arise with new vigour. Surely, says the prophet, the remedy is worse than the disease. There is wickedness in Israel, but it is slight compared with the awful, ruthless inhumanity of these invaders. Can it be the God of holiness who is directing them?[1] In sore anguish of heart he turns aside and craves another answer. Looking out as from a watch-tower over a world in ruins, he asks what traces there are of any divine plan in all this chaos. Then light breaks in upon him. He sees that in all wrong-doing there are the seeds of death; that 'tyranny is suicide'; that the proud wrong-doer, though used for a time by God, has no permanence. Yet, in spite of all, since God is everlasting, 'the just man shall live by his faithfulness.'[2] This is the unconquerable assertion of experience in the teeth of all denial. The link that binds the faithful soul to God can never be shattered. 'Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee,' whose roots of life go down to God. He can never perish; none can pluck him out of God's hand. Then, strong in this perfect confidence, Habakkuk rang out woe after woe upon the pitiless Chaldean. All his sins against humanity shall be avenged. Yet when the civilizations of heathendom have perished, something better shall arise, and 'the

[1] Hab. i. 13, &c.
[2] Hab. ii. 1–4.

earth shall be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah's glory, as the waters cover the sea.' [1]

Many doubt whether this last verse is not the believing comment of some later scribe. Yet it is the lawful conclusion of the thought of chapter ii. verse 4. Habakkuk gave no sign of the way in which this glory was to come. It was probably a later prophet who wrote the Psalm of Redemption in chapter iii., and pictured in such majestic language Jehovah Himself coming forth for the salvation of His anointed people. Our truest picture of Habakkuk is probably that of the lonely thinker who thought his way through bewildering doubt and scepticism to a faith whose foundations lay so deep that no tempests of dynastic or national changes could reach or shake them.

The crisis that drove Habakkuk to find in faith alone the solution which external events had failed to give called Jeremiah from his seclusion to take up again his interrupted ministry. It was now clear to all that his foe from the north was no spectre of a gloomy imagination, but a present danger.

Carchemish was to Jeremiah what the appeal of Ahaz to Tiglath-Pileser was to Isaiah: like a flash of lightning in the darkness, it lighted up to him the whole line of God's purposes on to the end. He foresaw his past anticipations passing into history. The conviction seized his mind that it was the will of Jehovah that all nations should serve the king of Babylon; to refuse his yoke, whether for Israel or another people, was to resist the decree of God.[2]

[1] Hab. ii. 14. [2] A. B. Davidson, D.B. ii. 571*a*.

Hence, burdened with the heaviest message that ever a patriot carried, bringing upon himself the constant reproach of cowardice and disloyalty, he came forth to proclaim the inevitable downfall of Jerusalem. Henceforth he stands before us as the foremost fighter in the arena, whose victory meant the ruin of his dearly loved native land.

We cannot trace here the long drawn-out tragedy of these closing years of Jerusalem, during which the prophet

> was condemned to watch the lingering agony of an exhausted country, to tend it during the alternate fits of stupefaction and raving which preceded its dissolution, and to see the symptoms of vitality disappear one by one, till nothing was left but coldness, darkness, and corruption.

All that can be done here is to indicate the thoughts about the future that he expressed.

These may be conveniently grouped under four divisions.

1. As concerned the state he became more and more convinced that it must fall. To the mechanical faith of those who held stubbornly to the letter of Isaiah's teaching as to the inviolability of Zion he opposed the lesson of the potter and the clay. God, who had shaped the nation in the past, can cast it now on the rubbish heap if He will. The one gleam of hope is in the thought that the crushed clay may on the potter's wheel be wrought into another vessel.[1] Yet when he

[1] Jer. xviii.

took the earthen bottle and in the sight of priests and elders smashed it on the ground and declared, 'Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel that cannot be made whole again,' that faint gleam was extinguished.[1] Similarly through the sternness of the great address in the temple court, which almost cost him his life, there breaks the hope that even yet through penitence and reformation the last calamity may be averted.[2] But this also fades away. Men shall hear no more the cheerful sound of the grinding of the mill-stones preparing the evening meal. No light set in a window shall brighten the dark streets at night-fall. No voice of mirth or of marriage gladness shall break the silence. For two generations the land must lie empty while the king of Babylon reigns supreme.[3] Hence, later, when envoys from many peoples, Edom, Moab, Tyre, and Sidon, met in Jerusalem to conspire against Babylon, seeking by one resolute effort to regain their freedom, Jeremiah appeared amongst them wearing on his shoulders such a yoke as oxen plough with. His message is that Jehovah is king of all, Nebuchadrezzar is His vicegerent, only in submission to him is there any hope of safety.[4] Reading such passages alone we should have to say that the old hope of the permanence of the earthly kingdom had utterly perished.

2. Yet this hope also belonged to Jeremiah. In

[1] Jer. xix.
[2] Jer. xxvi.
[3] Jer. xxv. 10–11.
[4] Jer. xxvii.

597, eleven years before the final tragedy, the first captivity had taken place, and a host of prisoners was carried away to exile. To them the prophet wrote words of comfort. Let them be patient and fear God in the lands of their captivity. God's thoughts to them were thoughts of peace. Let them only be loyal and faithful and they shall be restored to their own land. The kingdom was only interrupted, not destroyed.[1]

How, then, was this restored community to be governed? The answer is found in chapter xxiii. In the previous chapter the weakness and folly and untimely fate of the kings who followed Josiah had been described. Jehoahaz, in his exile in Egypt, is spoken of with pity; his fate is far sadder than his father's, who died in battle. Jehoiakim is spoken of with fierce contempt, the man with neither eyes nor heart except for plunder. Jehoiachin, whose brief reign lasted but a few months and ended in the first capture of Jerusalem, has been cast out like a broken bottle which no one wants. Naturally one would expect as a sequel an oracle about the next and last king of Judah, Zedekiah. But here a new and wondrous thought breaks in. Zedekiah, though too weak for his post, was not a bad king. A later writer describes him as 'the breath of our nostrils, the anointed of Jehovah . . . of whom we said, Under his shadow shall we live among the nations.'[2] Jeremiah treats him with sympathy and respect. So here he

[1] Jer. xxix.

[2] Lam. iv. 20.

seems to think of the meaning of his name, Zedekiah, i.e. Righteousness of Jehovah. Suddenly a light bursts on him. Just as Isaiah saw behind the feeble Hezekiah the figure of his ideal king, so here. The days are coming when a King shall arise whose name shall be Jehovah is our Righteousness, who shall be in reality what Zedekiah's name so pathetically suggests. He shall be the righteous Branch out of David's house, 'He shall reign as King, and deal wisely, and shall execute judgement and justice in the earth.'[1] Under his peaceful sway Judah and Israel, reunited once more, shall live in perpetual safety. He is no warlike conqueror, earthly glory is lost in the moral splendour of his reign, he is once more Isaiah's Prince of Peace.

This passage is denied to Jeremiah by many scholars, but it is powerfully defended by Cornill, whose exposition has been largely adopted. Cornill adds that the mention of 'the Branch' in Zechariah, where the name appears as that of the hoped-for Messianic king, and where it is evident that the prophet is using a designation long familiar to his hearers, is an incontestable proof of the genuineness of this passage. We may accept it with full confidence.

3. We have yet to mention the crowning hope of Jeremiah's life. As the Babylonian armies closed their lines around the doomed city he lay in prison, condemned by every soldier as a faint-hearted traitor and a public danger. There, as John Bunyan's prison on

[1] Jer. xxiii. 5-6.

Bedford Bridge was lit up by the glory of the Celestial City, the walls of Jeremiah's place of captivity seemed to break, and beyond them he saw the brightest vision of his life. He had seen much of the failure of solemn covenants between God and man. He had read in the Deuteronomic law-book how the finger of God Himself had written down the ten commandments. He knew of that great scene when king Josiah stood by the pillar and swore to keep that covenant. He had heard the rejoicings over the great celebration of the Passover that followed, and seen the vigorous attempt to purge the whole land from idolatry. Yet all this had ended in lamentable failure, and the end of the nation seemed close at hand. Where did the weakness lie? Doubtless in this, that men had failed to keep their side of the covenant, had made it an external pact, had never entered into it with true repentance, had known nothing of the circumcision of the heart. How could this be remedied? If man was too weak and sinful to do his part, was not failure inevitable? The answer comes like a flash. God Himself must once more intervene. Long centuries before He had traced His Will on tables of stone. Now He will go deeper. Entering Himself the dark recesses of the human heart He will do His work there, writing there His holy laws. Then, set free from sin's defilements, with the past forgotten, all shall know Him, and the peaceful days of blessing be brought in.[1]

[1] Jer. xxxi. 31-4.

This is the famous prophecy of the New Covenant, the imperishable crown of Jeremiah's faith, honoured because Christ Himself used it as He brake the bread and took the cup on the night when He was betrayed, in many respects one of the greatest utterances of the Old Testament. It is the more wonderful because of the striking contrast it presents to his earliest teaching. The young man saw little but disaster and darkness, the note of hope was almost entirely absent from his teaching. The old man, worn out by many privations, bearing always a crushing load of hatred and contempt, fought his way through, and saw this bright light beyond the gloom. Of him, as of few others in the world's history, it was proved true that

> tribulation worketh patience; and patience probation; and probation hope: and hope putteth not to shame; because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost which was given unto us.[1]

4. A few words must be added as to Jeremiah's attitude to the world outside. In the chapter that describes his call he is appointed as a prophet to the nations, 'to pluck up and to break down, and to destroy and to overthrow; to build and to plant.'[2] In harmony with this he declares the righteous retribution that Jehovah will mete out to all peoples. Bidden to take the cup of the wine of Jehovah's fury, and pass it round among all the nations, he commands them to

[1] Rom. v. 3–5. [2] Jer. i. 10.

drink till they stagger like a drunken man, as they taste this bitter draught of punishment.[1] So he declares: 'Jehovah hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh; as for the wicked, he will give them to the sword.'[2] In this he carries forward the conviction of every prophet from Amos onwards.

But, we ask, had he no thought of a conversion of the heathen? In laying the foundations of religion in the work of God in the human heart he went far beneath any national conception and reached the universal. Implicitly, at any rate, the prophecy of the new covenant reached all mankind. It would be strange if no signs of this application of his own principle were found in his preaching. The answer is found in chapter xvi. verses 19 and 20. Many scholars[3] doubt the genuineness of these words. But the weighty judgement of Cornill is given in their favour. His words may be quoted—

> The words which the returned heathen speak here are through and through Jeremiah, and the expectation that the heathen also will return to Jehovah is to be found everywhere in the tendency of Jeremiah's theology, and is a simple consequence of his conception of religion.

We believe that to be thoroughly justified. Turning from the impenitent evil of his own countrymen to the God whom he has found for himself, he saw even the

[1] Jer. xxv. 15 ff. [2] Jer. xxv. 31.
[3] e.g. Duhm and Giesebrecht.

heathen leaving their own vain gods to seek the same refuge.

> O Jehovah, my strength and my stronghold, and my refuge in the day of affliction,
> Unto Thee shall the nations come from the ends of the earth, and shall say,
> Only lies have our fathers inherited, vanity and things with no profit in them.

This light seemed to fade away afterwards, the absorbing question as to Jehovah's relation to His own people filling his heart, and leaving little room for other thoughts. Yet as Cornill says: 'By this flashing light-ray of Jeremiah's hope of the future, Deutero-Isaiah was set on fire, and increased it to the brightly burning flame of conscious universalism.'

If it be true that the great prophet of the Exile found his inspiration here, while our Lord Himself made His own and stamped with deeper meaning the message of the new covenant, Jeremiah's work received a nobler reward than he ever dared to dream. With the fall of Jerusalem and his forcible carrying away into Egypt his work was over. An impenetrable veil hides the close of his life from us. Yet all that was most precious in earlier prophecy was preserved in his teaching. His contribution to the Witness of Israel was of priceless value when the work of reconstruction was begun. And to us to-day his message, so piercing in its sincerity, so poignant in its pathos, so stirring in its last invincible hope, is of abiding worth.

CHAPTER V

PROPHETS OF THE EXILE

I. Ezekiel, prophet and priest—His call—His philosophy of history: (1) The honour of Jehovah's name must be made manifest at any cost—Contrast with earlier prophets. (2) For this end Jerusalem must fall. (3) Certainty of the kingdom—Relation to Davidic king. (4) Conflict with the armies of evil. (5) Picture of restored Church and State—Relation of the Prince to the Messianic King. II. Advent of Cyrus—Hopes of the exiled Jews—Oracle of downfall of Babylon in Isaiah xiii. and xiv.—Deutero-Isaiah—Cyrus as the Anointed of Jehovah—Israel elect for the service of mankind—Promises of grace and glory—The 'Servant of Jehovah' sections—Their relation to the rest of the prophecy—Three methods of interpretation: (*a*) National, cf. Peake; (*b*) Ideal, cf. Skinner; (*c*) Personal, cf. Duhm, Sellin, Gressmann—The true view of (*c*) stated—The Servant intervenes between the present incapacity and the future glory—Relation of the Servant to the Davidic King—Objections to this view considered—Conclusion—Greatness of the height now attained.

I

AMONGST the captives carried away to Babylonia in the first deportation in 597 B.C. was the next in the great succession of prophets, Ezekiel. Like Jeremiah he belonged to a priestly family. Unlike him he found in the details of ritual

Ezekiel.

much that appealed to his religious sense, and sought by combining external forms with inward renewal to prepare a community fit to discharge the mission of Israel. The blending of the prophetic and priestly streams of thought which has already been marked in Deuteronomy became still more notable in him. He thus became the leader of the next great movement in Hebrew history. The whole future organization of the people bore the stamp of his influence. Whilst the fall of Jerusalem made a great gap between past and future, the teaching of Ezekiel formed the bridge over which the dearly-bought truths of earlier experience passed, to find a new resting-place in the consciences and hearts of his successors.

Ezekiel's call to his office is described by him in a passage rich in power of expression, though its details are not easy to understand. Isaiah's vision had met him in the temple courts. Jeremiah had seen the symbol of God's working in the signs of returning spring. Ezekiel, looking northwards across the wide plains of Babylonia, saw a storm-cloud moving towards him, brightening as it came, until, luminous with a supernatural splendour, it revealed to him the throne of God Himself. Each part of this vision, the glowing fire, the wheels full of eyes, the cherubim, the majestic Figure seated above the firmament, the noise like the sound of many waters, adds to the awe and wonder of the sight.[1] It is the King, almighty, omniscient,

[1] For an extraordinarily interesting account of a sunset effect

world-filling, who has drawn near to speak to His servant. Henceforward it was the task of Ezekiel's life to set forth and to justify the world-plan of this transcendent God. Before the vision passed he saw a hand reaching out to him the roll of a book, written on both sides with a bitter message of lamentation and woe.[1] Eating it, he found it sweet to the taste, sign that he had been brought into such harmony with the divine purposes that his best delight and pleasure would be in declaring them. In this Ezekiel is a striking contrast to Jeremiah. There were times, it is true, when in almost identical words Jeremiah spoke of eating the words of Jehovah and finding them the joy and rejoicing of his heart; but often they burnt within him like a consuming fire, and he uttered them only because he could not refrain.[2] Both forms of utterance, messages from reluctant lips that would fain suppress them if they dared, and messages from those who find a stern joy in declaring the divine purposes of judgement, will always be present wherever there is a true prophetic ministry.

The details of Ezekiel's life are little known. This, however, is of small consequence, as his conceptions are practically the same throughout his whole course. Till the destruction of Jerusalem his constant declarations

on the banks of the Chebar vide Mrs. Hume-Griffith's *Behind the Veil in Persia and Turkish Arabia.* It closely resembles Ezekiel's vision, and suggests the physical substratum of his experience.

[1] Ezek. ii. 9 ff.

[2] Jer. xv. 16; xx. 9.

of the certainty of its overthrow exposed him to contempt and danger. Afterwards, the fulfilment of his predictions won for him a new consideration, and many gathered to listen to him. But his philosophy of history is a consistent whole, and we may proceed without delay to outline it. It may be arranged under five leading thoughts:—

1. The whole purpose of human history is to manifest the glory of Jehovah and the honour of His name. It was for this end that He chose Israel long ago, and it is to achieve it that He will restore the people to their own land.

This thought is thrown into strong relief by the fact that Ezekiel takes a darker view of the history of Israel than any of the earlier prophets. Jeremiah had spoken longingly of the early days of faithfulness, 'the love of thy bridal days, the kindness of thy youth,'[1] Similarly, Amos,[2] Hosea,[3] and Isaiah,[4] all refer to a time of loyalty and obedience. But Ezekiel will have none of this. In the teeth of the national pride, rich with all the stirring memories of heroes and patriots for whom Jehovah had wrought such signal deliverances, he flings the charge that the past has been an unbroken record of ingratitude and infidelity. His terrible sixteenth chapter, with its successive pictures of the foundling child, the unfaithful wife, and the abandoned prostitute, puts this most forcibly;

[1] Jer. ii. 2.
[2] Amos v. 25.
[3] Hosea ix. 10.
[4] Isa. i. 21–6.

but the thought recurs constantly. Hence the choice of Israel was due to nothing in herself, but was the free and sovereign determination of Jehovah. Whatever Israel may be, such a purpose cannot be defeated. It must prevail.

At first thought this appears hard and unattractive teaching as compared with Hosea's tender words about the child found by a father's love, taught to make its first halting steps, and led out of Egypt.[1] Yet it is plain that in Ezekiel's day gentler teaching must have failed. He saw that there was in the national character a hard bed-rock of unbelief and superstition that had never yet yielded to the divine influence. Till that was seen and confessed all hope of restoration was impossible. But to bring real penitence God would spare no chastisement. If we describe Ezekiel by the terms of later days, we call him a Calvinist. He approached his problems from the side of the divine decrees. His sense of the utter ill-desert of Israel is paralleled by the complete self-condemnation of the noblest of the Puritans, and is to be understood with equal literalness in both cases. If we stumble at his expressions of the final purpose, 'I wrought for My Name's sake, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations,'[2] we may remember the very first petition of the Lord's Prayer, 'Hallowed be Thy Name.' Ezekiel did not understand the fullness of meaning

[1] Hosea xi. 1 and 3.
[2] Ezek. xx. 9–14, &c.

of that prayer, but his message was not replaced, only transfigured by it.

2. To secure this purpose, Ezekiel declared unflinchingly that Jerusalem must fall. For a time, it was true, this would result in the dishonouring of Jehovah in the sight of the nations, who would count the ruin of the people the proof of His helplessness.[1] Even in Israel we know that there were many whose faith was utterly shattered, and who turned aside to heathen abominations. Yet, he seems to say, God will pay even this price to establish His kingdom. When Jerusalem falls, all the surrounding nations, Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, Sidon, Egypt, must bear the righteous penalty for their high-handed scorn of Jehovah and His people and their self-deification.[2] It will be over the wreckage of a ruined world that the new building will rise. In this we see again the ancient expectation, so often marked before, of the great catastrophe heralding a new world-era.

3. Ezekiel had no doubt of the certainty of the kingdom of Jehovah. In the earlier part of his ministry, after he had seen the temple deserted by the heavenly glory,[3] hope broke through in the promise, 'I will gather you from the peoples and give you the land of Israel . . . and I will put a new spirit within you . . . and I will be your God.'[4] The universal

[1] Ezek. xxxvi. 20, &c.
[2] Ezek. xxv.–xxxii. passim, esp. xxviii. 2; xxix. 3.
[3] Ezek. x. 18, &c.
[4] Ezek. xi. 17–20.

kingdom was promised to David's house. The great, broad-winged, speckled eagle, the king of Babylon, had transplanted one king to Babylon, carrying away the top of the cedar of Lebanon. In its place he had set up a kingdom of his own, under his own nominee, Zedekiah.[1] But this had been smitten by the east wind and withered. In its place Jehovah Himself will plant a shoot of the high cedar, the Davidic house.[2] This shall flourish on the mountain-top. Unto it fowl of every wing shall gather to dwell in its branches, and all other trees, every other kingdom, shall own the work of Jehovah.[3] This lawful king is mentioned again in chapter xxi. verse 27. The impious king Zedekiah shall lose crown and diadem, and the monarchy of Israel cease. Yet this is only for a time, 'till he come whose right it is, and I will give it him.' Ezekiel thus reiterates the older prophecy of Gen. xlix. 10.[4]

After the fall of Jerusalem the prophecies became still more plain. Two great pictures lie before us of the restored community. Judah and Israel are reunited once more in their own land, over whom one king shall rule, as of old, 'And my servant David shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd.'[5] The land that once lay waste and desolate shall become

[1] Ezekiel will not admit Zedekiah at all as Jehovah's representative. All the hope of the future lay for him in the exiles carried away with Jehoiachin, 'the top of the cedar.'

[2] Ezek. xvii. 22.

[3] Ezek. xvii. 23–4.

[4] See above, p. 84.

[5] Ezek. xxxiv. 23; xxxvii. 24, &c.

'like the garden of Eden.'[1] The people themselves shall be purged from all filthiness by the sprinkling of clean water, 'and ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and ye shall be My people, and I will be your God.' All this is to be wrought by the sovereign interposition of Jehovah, whose omnipotence is shown in the great vision of chapter xxxvii. verses 1–14, where His life-giving breath inspires life into the dead bones of the nation so that they stand up, 'an exceeding great army,' God's warrior host once more against all the forces of evil.

4. Ezekiel's anticipations would appear to have reached their goal in these chapters; but two further sections are added to them, each of great significance.

The first of these (chapters xxxviii. and xxxix.) depicts a great invasion of Palestine by dark and mysterious heathen hordes from the far north. Ezekiel states that this inroad has been long predicted by former prophets. In the uncertainty as to the dates of such passages as Isa. xviii. 12, Micah v. 11, Joel ii. 2, &c., it cannot be definitely decided whether he refers to such sayings, or to prophecies not found in our canon based upon the popular expectation of such a catastrophe. But in Ezekiel this great event is once more subordinated to the ruling purpose of God, that the heathen may own His power.[2] Before the invading armies meet God's own people, His terrible majesty will shake the earth, and His enemies perish in storms

[1] Ezek. xxxvi. 35, &c.

[2] Ezek. xxxviii. 16.

of hail and fire from heaven. All that remains for Israel to do is to bury the dead and gather up the spoil of the ruined hosts. Then the heathen that still remain will acknowledge both the righteousness and the power of Israel's God.[1]

5. Finally, the prophet sets himself to draw an idyllic picture of the future blessedness of Israel. It is here that the prophetic and priestly streams become altogether one. The glory of Jehovah returns to fill the restored temple.[2] From the western gate a stream flows out to bring sweetness and healing to the waters of the Dead Sea, and to change the desolate range of hills sloping down from Jerusalem to the Jordan Valley into gardens and orchards.[3] Every detail of lawful worship is to be carried out with strictest care. The Levites, who in former days had gone astray—almost certainly those who had officiated without sense of blame at the old high places—are now degraded from the priesthood, and only permitted to perform inferior tasks. The Levites of Zadok's house, loyal guardians of the pure temple worship, must henceforth be the only priests.[4] Holiness is the one all-pervading note of the national life; and the whole atmosphere is suffused with heavenly brightness, reflected in the new name of the city, Jehovah-shammah—the LORD is there.[5] If as we read these chapters the details

[1] Ezek. xxxix. 21–3.
[2] Ezek. xliii. 3–4.
[3] Ezek. xlvii. 1 ff.
[4] Ezek. xliv. 10–16; xlviii. 11.
[5] Ezek. xlviii. 35.

perplex, and the emphasis laid on the sacerdotal and ritual side seems overstrained, we may recall that their thoughts 'embody in material form Ezekiel's sober but intense conception of religion, as completely as the Gothic cathedrals translate into concrete and abiding stone and marble the soaring visions of mediaeval Christianity.'[1]

One figure in this final description has been left as yet undescribed, 'the prince' who is to be the civil ruler of the new nation. He is thought of as having sons and successors;[2] is charged with the duty of supplying the material of the public sacrifices;[3] and, whilst he has certain rights of access to the sanctuary which the common people do not possess,[4] he is not permitted to perform any definitely priestly acts. Whilst it must be fully recognized that the picture is incomplete, inasmuch as the secular life of the nation is hardly seen at all in these visions, it is hard to see how to identify this prince with the long-expected Messiah. We need not suppose, as do some, that Ezekiel, in these final chapters, had broken with his former conceptions.[5] It is perhaps truer to say that in this final vision his first thought of God's transcendent power came back with overwhelming force. In the description of the heavenly city in the Apocalypse of John, which owes so much to Ezekiel, there is no need of sun or moon. In Ezekiel's

[1] Lofthouse, *Cent. B.* p. 289.
[2] Ezek. xlvi. 16–18.
[3] Ezek. xlv. 17.
[4] Ezek. xliv. 1–3.
[5] e.g. Stade, *A. T. Theologie*, p. 293.

city, God Himself was King; the grandeur of that thought left no room for any other. He could not go on to say, as did John, 'the lamp thereof is the Lamb.' But the pictures of his earlier and later prophecies are not exclusive of one another.

Looking back over this sketch, we may see Ezekiel's contribution to the Witness of Israel. It has been outside our purpose to speak of the way in which he deepened the sense of individual responsibility, and so prepared for the more spiritual kingdom of the future. But we see him looking out with calm and confident gaze over all the tumult of the nations, and yet handing on with unconquerable faith the hope in the world-dominion of Jehovah. If he helped to bind the chains of legalism around his descendants, we can now see that such a discipline was necessary before his loftier thoughts could be received. As the reality of the struggle against the powers of evil is forced home upon us in each new conflict with social evils, we hear his words, not as 'a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument,'[1] but as the message of the Most High, declaring—

> I will seek that which was lost, and will bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: and the fat and the strong I will destroy; I will feed them in judgement.[2]

If his doctrine, that the controlling purpose of world-

[1] Ezek. xxxiii. 32. [2] Ezek. xxxiv. 16.

history is the manifestation of Jehovah, seems sometimes to be narrow, yet it contains in germ all the philosophy of a truly missionary faith. Here, as so often in his Scriptural paraphrases, Charles Wesley has penetrated to the inmost truth in his spiritualizing of Ezekiel's words—

> That I Thy mercy may proclaim,
> That all mankind Thy truth may see,
> Hallow Thy great and glorious Name,
> And perfect holiness in me.

II

When Ezekiel was sketching his ideal city of the future, 572 B.C., Babylon was at the summit of its power. The long and glorious reign of Nebuchadrezzar, 605–562, had still ten years to run. During this period Babylonia was guarded by a great system of defences, whilst the restoration of the canals tended to revive both commerce and agriculture. Meanwhile the arts of life were eagerly cultivated. Ezekiel's description of 'the Chaldeans portrayed with vermilion, girded with girdles upon their loins, with dyed turbans upon their heads, all of them princes to look upon,'[1] is paralleled by an account given by Herodotus of a Babylonian gentleman.[2] Yet within a few years of Nebuchadrezzar's death his dynasty lost the crown, and a usurper, Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon, seized the throne, 555 B.C. Five years later came the

[1] Ezek. xxiii. 14–15. [2] I. 195.

startlingly sudden appearance of Cyrus, king of Anshan, in West Elam, who overthrew his suzerain, Astyages of Media, and with marvellous statesmanship joined the peoples of the North into the Medo-Persian empire.

Cyrus is one of the favourite heroes of the ancient world, and legend has been very busy with his origin and romantic history. But the facts of his life are astonishing enough without the aid of fiction. Uniting his troops into a finely disciplined army, he threatened the northern frontier of Babylonia. Then, turning westwards into Asia Minor, he shattered the power of Croesus, king of Lydia. After some years, on which, unfortunately, the annals of Babylonia are silent, he marched southwards. There he met and defeated the crown prince, Belshazzar. A detachment of his army, aided by treachery within the walls, entered Babylon without resistance. Nabonidus was captured. Belshazzar, making a last stand with the remnant of his forces, was slain, perhaps in his fortified palace in the capital. Cyrus entered the city in triumph, 538 B.C., and the Babylonian empire was at an end. The power of the great Semitic races was now lost for ever, and a new epoch in the history of civilization began. We stand here at one of the great turning-points of history.

Cyrus's entrance into Babylon was hailed with delight by many to whom the reign of Nabonidus had been unwelcome from the first. In the well-known

Cyrus cylinder, now in the British Museum, written probably by Babylonian priests under the conqueror's direction, it is said that Marduk, in wrath at the unfaithfulness of Nabonidus, had himself called Cyrus as a deliverer.

> He searched through all lands; he saw him, and he sought the righteous prince, after his own heart, whom he took by the hand. Cyrus, king of Anshan, he called by name; to sovereignty over the whole world he appointed him. . . . Marduk, the great lord, guardian of his people, looked with joy on his pious works and his upright heart; he commanded him to go to his city Babylon, and he caused him to take the road to Babylon, going by his side as a friend and companion.

Every Bible student is arrested at once by the parallel between these words and those of the great unknown writer whose work is contained in chapters xl.–lv. of our Book of Isaiah. In the first part of this book are to be found two chapters which reflect the conditions of this period (xiii. xiv.). There God's consecrated ones, proudly exulting, come from the mountains, and Babylon 'the proud splendour of the Chaldeans' is overthrown like Sodom and Gomorrah, and left a ruined and lonely spot, haunted by demons.[1] Then, in a magnificent passage, the descent of the king of Babylon into Sheol is described. The spirits of dead tyrants rise from their shadowy thrones to greet this fallen star. 'Is this the man that made the earth to

[1] Isa. xiii. 19 ff.

tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and overthrew the cities thereof; that let not loose his prisoners to their home?' Doubtless this fierce hatred is inspired by the faith in Jehovah's universal rule, and was breathed out by some captive Jewish patriot. But the writer of chapters xl.–lv. has a far wider outlook than this. Watching the career of Cyrus he saw in him the anointed servant of Jehovah. All unknown to himself this new world-conqueror was an instrument in the hands of the God of Israel, who would go before him to subdue nations, to make the rugged places plain, to break in pieces the doors of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron.[2] Challenging the assembled nations to explain the origin of this warrior from the sun-rising, whom victory meets at every step, who chases them before him and makes 'their sword as dust, their bow as driven stubble,'[3] Jehovah declares that this is His work, and comforts Israel with the assurance of His abiding favour and protection. The work of Cyrus is to set Israel free, and to ensure the restoration of the temple. At the end he will learn to attribute all his success to Jehovah, and to own His supremacy. The conquered nations passing as captives before Israel will do homage as to the people of the one true God.[4] Some think that the close resemblances between the words thus addressed to

[1] Isa. xiv. 16–17. [2] Isa. xlv. 1–6.
[3] Isa. xli. 1, vide Skinner, in loco.
[4] Isa. xliv. 28–9; xlv. 13–14.

Cyrus and those on his own cylinder are best explained by supposing that in editing his works after Babylon had fallen, the prophet consciously adopted some of the phrases of the priests. Certainly the coincidences seem too many to be accidental. If so, we have only one more illustration of the serene and confident faith of the best representatives of Israel. All that was most wonderful in martial exploits, and all that was most far-reaching in religious expectation, was fearlessly taken and applied to the insignificant remnant of that little Palestinian state, exiled now for two generations from its home across the desert.

Turning now to the prophet's teaching as to the mission of Israel, we find the great thought that this people is elect for the sake of mankind. The God who formed the earth did not mean it to be a desolation, left empty because its inhabitants had been consumed by the fires of judgement. Rather He proclaims through His prophet: 'Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.'[1]

Here, then, is given the key to unlock the history of the past. Israel is the servant of Jehovah, chosen long ago in the person of Abraham, charged with a mission to all nations. This servant-people, however, has proved blind and deaf beyond belief to the purposes of its God. Because of this it has been given over as a prey to its enemies. In its deep degradation

[1] Isa. xlv. 22.

and wretchedness it thinks that God has forgotten it. But now in marvellous words of consolation Israel is assured of the everlasting kindness of Jehovah. Mighty herald voices proclaim His coming. He, the almighty Creator,

> who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance,

is coming now as a tender Shepherd to lead His exiled children home, 'with His right arm He gathers the lambs, and bears them in His bosom.' Led back to their own land, ransomed and forgiven, they should dwell in peace in Jerusalem; whilst flashing out from the Holy City the true religion should enlighten the world.

There is no need to dwell on the beauty of the language of these chapters, some of the noblest in all the world's literature. McCurdy ranks the author with Virgil among the poets, peers

> in their combination of subtle, all-pervasive tenderness and sympathy, sustained and not overstrained fervour, splendour and simplicity of diction, the enchantment of perfect speech set to the music of the universal human heart.[1]

We have yet to deal with the four famous passages whose interpretation is one of the most difficult tasks of the expositor of to-day: xlii. 1–4; xlix. 1–6; l. 4–9; lii. 13–liii. 12.

[1] *H.P.M.* iii. p. 421.

These passages offer so many points of contrast to the chapters in which they are found that some scholars consider that they come from a different author, and have been inserted in their present position by the final editor of the book. Such a theory creates more difficulties than it solves. The sections have undoubtedly exercised an influence on those that follow them, and cannot be excised without serious injury. Without attempting to state reasons, it must suffice to say here that a simpler explanation is to be found in the changing moods of the prophet, sometimes dazzled with the brightness of the coming glory, sometimes cast down by the terrible contrast between his hopes and the present moral and political position of his fellow-countrymen.

Taking the passages as they stand, we may very briefly indicate the chief methods of interpretation that have been adopted.

(*a*) Starting from the undoubted fact that in many passages the 'servant of Jehovah' is the actual, historical nation of Israel, some scholars claim that it is possible to retain this use of the phrase throughout. For English readers, a very persuasive putting forth of this view is found in Dr. Peake's *Problem of Suffering in the Old Testament*. This writer holds that the unnamed speakers who ask in chapter liii. 1, 'Who could have believed that which we have heard?' are the heathen nations. They had watched with contempt the coming into existence of the puny people

of Israel, and turned with abhorrence from it in its calamity, covered with wounds and smitten with loathsome disease. Now they see with amazement its exaltation, and learn that its death was that of a martyr. 'The innocent Israel had suffered and been slain, while the guilty nations had lived.' Then they learn that Israel had been the vicarious sufferer for their sin, and find in their knowledge of the true God that Israel's chastisement had won their peace.

To defend this conclusion, Dr. Peake has to meet the objection that in two passages, xlix. 5–6, and liii. 8, the Servant is expressly distinguished from the people. He does this partly by retranslation and partly by alteration of the text. Thus, in the first passage, he translates so as to make Jehovah the subject of the verb 'bring back' in verse 5, and deletes the words, 'that thou shouldst be My Servant' in verse 6. In chapter liii. verse 8, instead of 'for the transgression of My people was he stricken,' he amends the text and renders 'for our rebellions he was smitten to death.'

These changes are defended on linguistic grounds which cannot be discussed here. But on the general question Dr. Peake argues that the usual translation cannot be right because the work of bringing back Israel from captivity is always elsewhere assigned to Jehovah, never to the Servant. But as against this it seems quite plain that chapter xlix. verse 5 does not refer primarily to the restoration from exile, but to the spiritual renewal. The verse should probably be

rendered, 'To bring back Jacob again *to Himself*, and that Israel be not swept away.' In that case, chapter liii. verse 8 only marks a fuller development of the thought. The mode of this bringing back to God is there described; it is the vicarious death of the Servant that is to effect this grand result.

Dr. Peake's view is, it is clear, open to the very serious objection that it requires the alteration, on almost exclusively subjective grounds, of two passages which contradict it. But there is a far graver reason against it in that it requires us to believe that Israel's national sufferings are regarded as innocently borne and redemptive in their efficacy. This is in strong contradiction to the teaching of all previous prophets that Israel was guilty and suffering for its own sin, and directly denies the statement of chapter xliii. verses 27–8 that it was because of transgression that Jacob had been made a curse. Dr. Peake attempts to meet this by saying that the speakers in chapter liii. are heathen, and that, compared with them, Israel was relatively, if not absolutely, righteous. He even suggests that the words, 'although he had done no violence, neither was deceit in his mouth,' do not connote sinlessness. Further, he remarks that the writer considered that Israel's punishment had already been excessive: 'She hath received at the Lord's hands double for all her sin.'

Yet the cumulative force of these arguments is very small. If Israel had been too severely punished, it was

for sin, and nothing else, that she had suffered. If the absence of deceit does not necessarily mean sinlessness, yet deceit is again and again represented by the Bible writers as the very core of sinfulness.[1] Moreover, if the penitence of the heathen is founded on a misunderstanding of the meaning of Israel's sufferings, it seems as though the whole spiritual value of Isa. liii. is destroyed. A parallel has been sometimes sought in Paul's argument in Rom. xi. 11, &c.[2] But the thought there is that because of Israel's sinful unbelief, not because of its patient suffering, the door of faith was opened to the Gentiles; a very different thing!

We are compelled, therefore, decisively to reject this interpretation. Its great recommendation is that it retains throughout the same meaning of 'Servant.' But the advantages of this are far too dearly purchased.

(*b*) A second view, widely held, is that which regards the Servant as *the ideal Israel*. An admirable exposition of this is given by Dr. Skinner.

> The Servant is first of all a personification of Israel as it exists in the mind and purpose of God, of the ideal for which the nation has been chosen and towards which its history is being fashioned. This ideal has never yet been realized in the earthly Israel, and hence it is described (as in xlii. 1 ff.) in language which could not be used of any section of the historic people. But, on the other hand, since the ideal is inseparably connected with the nation, it is intelligible that the significant parts of the history should

[1] Cf. Jer. ix. 6; v. 27, &c.

[2] Cf. Skinner, *Isaiah*, p. 234.

be introduced into the portrait of the Servant, and that he should thus be spoken of as one who has passed through certain experiences and has still a career before him (xlix. 1 ff.; l. 4 ff.; lii. 13 ff.).[1]

This ideal had been approximately realized in the loyal section of the nation, who had suffered many things for their faithfulness. From them the prophet learnt to see how suffering may be redemptive, and hence it was natural that this thought should find expression in his conception of the Servant, who embodies all that is of religious significance in the true idea of Israel. 'Finally, although this probably goes beyond the writer's conscious meaning, the personification of the ideal Israel easily passes into the conception of the ideal Israelite.'[2]

Such an exposition as this avoids the objections that have been urged against the previous view, and is, one believes, far truer to the essential teaching. Yet it has peculiar difficulties of its own. It is hard to think of an Ideal which had never had a real existence suffering for the sins of others. A nation can suffer, or an individual, but an ideal! In spite of all that has been said about the extraordinary power of personification which the Hebrews possessed, one remains unconvinced that chapter liii. could have

[1] *Isaiah*, vol. ii. p. 235.

[2] Ibid. p. 236. (For further expositions of this view, see Davidson, *O. T. Prophecy*, and Edghill, *The Evidential Value of Prophecy*.)

been written about anything other than a real existence.

(*c*) Hence one is driven back to seek again in a personal explanation of the Servant the solution of the problem. The tendency in this direction has been greatly accelerated by the brilliant commentary of Duhm. In his earlier work on the *Theology of the Prophets* this scholar advocated the 'ideal' view, but has since become convinced that the strongly individual character of the passages requires a personal original. Accordingly, he finds this original in a righteous teacher of the law, who had been martyred for his loyalty. We need not discuss this view here further than to say that the figure drawn by Duhm is altogether too slight to correspond to the great lines of the portrait in chapter liii. But we believe that his instinct in seeking for a person is just and right. On the same lines Sellin attempts to show that Jehoiachin, supposed to have voluntarily given himself up in order to save the captivity of his people, and afterwards honoured by the king of Babylon,[1] is the person of whom these words were written. Again, one feels that in this king 'who did what was evil in the sight of Jehovah, according to all that his father had done,'[2] and for whom Jeremiah felt pity, but no reverence,[3] is altogether too small for such a part.

Once more, in the work previously referred to,

[1] 2 Kings xxv. 27 ff. [2] 2 Kings xxiv. 9.
[3] Jer. xxii. 24–30.

Gressmann criticizes with great force all collective interpretations. He then concludes that the Servant must be an individual, and one well known both to the prophet and his hearers. This, he holds, explains the enigmatic and incomplete references to the Servant's life and activity. Struck by the atmosphere of mystery, he finds the original of these passages in hymns sung in Babylon at the ritual of a dying and reviving God. Some such passages were taken over by the prophet and used to depict an eschatological figure which Jehovah will send to Israel to lead it back to Him and to spread abroad His light to the end of the earth. Gressmann is convinced that no contemporary figure is great enough to fulfil such tasks.[1]

In all these views the common point of agreement is that an Individual must be found. If, then, all these identifications fail to satisfy us, and Gressmann's picture of a dying Adonis is, apart from deeper considerations, irreconcilable with the suffering Servant, with visage more marred than any man's, smitten as though with leprosy, where are we to find the key to the problem?

We believe that here there dawned upon the mind of the prophet the vision of the only type of Servant who could truly perform God's commission. At first, in the glow of hope which filled him at the news of the victories of Cyrus, he saw no interval between promise and achievement. It was God's work, and His chosen people could not fail. Then he turned

[1] Op. cit. pp. 312–27.

back to actualities, and saw that his fellow countrymen were altogether unprepared, blind and deaf and stubborn and hopeless. The present misery of the people is described in chapter xlii. verses 18–25. What good there is in the people is downtrodden and expiring, a bruised reed, a dimly burning wick. Israel has left its God, and refused to weary itself about Him.[1] What can possibly bridge the gap between the ideal future and the present weakness? The answer appears to be given in the Servant passages. There is to come One who shall begin a work not by clamour and self-assertion, but by the silent influences of the spirit (xlii. 1–4). For this work he has been prepared in secret by Jehovah, kept till the fullness of time was come (xlix. 1 ff.). In his work, when once begun, though daily taught by God, he must endure shame and spitting and reproach; yet even that shall not overturn his faith (l. 4 ff.). Then the prophet sounds a deeper note, and shows the Servant laden with unheard-of sorrows, given over, a guiltless victim, to an unjust death. At this awful tragedy contrition and penitence seize all beholders. They become conscious that all has been borne for their sakes. Then, finally, the Servant, restored in glory, sees the travail of his soul and is satisfied, since the fruit of his sorrows is a great and glorious influence in the world.

Such, in the baldest language, is in outline this great prophecy. Who, then, is this Servant? Is it

[1] Isa. xliii. 22, &c.

the Messiah-King of whom earlier prophets spoke? We cannot maintain that at first this was present to the prophet's consciousness. All that we can say is that as Isaiah the son of Amoz saw rising out of the turmoil and strife of his day the king wondrous in counsel and divine in his strength, so his great successor saw this righteous Servant of Jehovah standing between the present and the future.

Yet when his description of the Servant's death and glory is complete he does seem to return to knit his own hopes with those which had gone before. After the perfect picture of the restored Jerusalem in chapter liv., where the afflicted, tempest-tossed city has her stones laid with fair colours, and her foundations with sapphires, where all her children, like the Servant, have become disciples of Jehovah, he returns to describe the lasting joys of the Messianic community, where all the promises made to David shall be realized. Here, then, the figures blend. The Servant is the King, only he is clothed, not with earthly splendour, but with the divine Spirit. He does not rule with violence, nor destroy the wicked with his breath; his weapons are the message of God, his appeal his vicarious death, his promises forgiveness and peace. If this exposition is true, Old Testament anticipation reaches its zenith here. The Witness of Israel as thus set forth searches the depths of human nature, and seems to stand on the very threshold of the New Testament.

It is necessary, however, to consider briefly what

many scholars hold to be unanswerable objections to this view. Mr. Edghill considers that two of these are quite conclusive; first, that the Servant is spoken of as having a present existence and a past experience, and second, that there is no room between the prophet's own historical standpoint and the return from Babylon for the emergence of such a person.[1] Dr. A. B. Davidson also holds the second reason as decisive, and many other names might be quoted.

But in reply to this it must be said that it is just the vagueness with which the Servant's life and experience is spoken of that makes it hard to interpret him either as a historical person, or as Israel in any sense at all. Gressmann remarks on the gap which yawns between his choice from his mother's womb and his future glorification. 'We do not learn what the Servant has done before, nor on whom he has exerted his power, whether on Israel or on the heathen.'[2] Or as Giesebrecht, arguing against the personification theories, asks, 'Where did he appear? How did he appear? Who put the hindrances in his way?'

Our thoughts turn back at once to Isa. ix. There we read: 'Unto us a Child is born.' The tense is perfect, as of a finished fact. At once this Child is declared as sitting on the throne of his father David. The closeness of the parallel seems to support a similar individual interpretation in both cases. Moreover, as to the objection with regard to the chronology, we have

[1] Op. cit. pp. 297–8. [2] Op. cit. p. 320.

learnt to understand that time hardly enters into the visions of the prophets. Between the glorious future and the gloomy present the Servant's work must come. We do not expect the prophets to set forth a chronological chart of the future, or to be always consistent with their own utterances at different times. No one has taught us more impressively than Dr. A. B. Davidson the need of looking away from the mechanical and structural parts of prophecy if we desire to see its essential meaning. Because of the lessons we have learned from this great master himself we have ventured to doubt his conclusions here.

Here, then, as the Exile draws to its close, we seem to stand on the high mountain, to hear the trumpet call announcing the coming of the kingdom at last. As a matter of fact the way turned downhill once more. Yet as we ponder these great thoughts and see how high they soar, we may surely say—

> I remember well
> One journey, how I feared the track was missed,
> So long the city I desired to reach
> Lay hid; when suddenly its spires afar
> Flashed through the circling clouds; you may conceive
> My transport. Soon the vapours closed again,
> But I had seen the city, and one such glance
> No darkness could obscure: nor shall the present—
> A few dull hours, a passing shame or two,
> Destroy the vivid memories of the past.

'What, no celestial city?' said the pilgrims. 'Did we not see it from the Delectable Mountains?'

CHAPTER VI

PROPHETS OF THE RETURN

Silence of Deutero-Isaiah—Discouraging conditions of first Return—Death of Cyrus and resulting anarchy—Accession of Darius—Prophecy of Haggai—His promises to Zerubbabel—Expected Messianic age—Ministry of Zechariah—Zerubbabel as the Branch—Anticipated glory of Jerusalem—Failure of these hopes—The glory of Athens and insignificance of Jerusalem—Isa. lvi.-lxvi.—Unwavering faith in the future supremacy of Israel—The Saviour-God—The Book of Malachi and its message—The arrival of Ezra—The work of Nehemiah—The reading of the law—The priestly code—Its origin and significance—Teaching of Gen. i.—Priestly ideals—Their value—Piety of the Psalms—The Elephantine papyri—Weakening of the Persian power—Isa. xxiv.-xxvii.—Picture of the ideal future.

I

THERE is a saddening contrast between the brilliant anticipations of the return from exile which marked the first prophecies of Deutero-Isaiah and the actual course of history. We have seen reason to believe that the prophet himself saw that between the future glory and the present want of spiritual power some great life and death must intervene, that so the people might be prepared through

penitence and forgiveness to fulfil the national destiny. If so, the fact that he is silent as to the Return, and simply vanishes from sight, receives an explanation. Nearly a century earlier, Jeremiah had left his prophetic life and withdrawn to his home because his expectations had been falsified. But whilst he learnt there deeper truths, which he was presently to declare, his successor's message was already complete. We cannot follow his future history, though we would give much to possess his comments on the events which followed the decrees of Cyrus. He is like the unknown authors of Deuteronomy, in that he had to leave to later generations the justification of his teaching. The parallel becomes closer when we remember that in each case it was the outward form, rather than the inward meaning, which impressed the first hearers. Both received their final vindication in the teaching of Jesus, in whose words are so many references both to Deuteronomy and to the Servant of Jehovah.

To those, however, who gladly hailed the permission of Cyrus to return to Jerusalem as the dawning of a new day, no misgivings were present. Led by Zerubbabel, grandson of the hapless Jehoiachin, and accompanied by Joshua, grandson of that Seraiah who was chief priest at the time of the destruction of the temple, and who was executed by Nebuchadrezzar at Riblah, they made the long journey into Palestine, re-erected the altar of burnt-offering, and looked for the signs of divine approval. The disillusionment that

followed was very bitter. The half-caste Samaritans, descendants partly of Israelites of the Northern Kingdom who had escaped captivity after the fall of Samaria, partly of foreign settlers, claimed to share in the rebuilding of the temple. No sooner was their offer rejected, than by open hostility and subtle misrepresentations to the Persian authorities they succeeded in wrecking the schemes of restoration. The returned exiles found themselves in a land which had been ravaged again and again by invading armies. Forests had been cut down, hillsides once rich with vineyards and olive-groves had been denuded of their soil, great heaps of scattered ruins, haunted by prowling jackals, covered the sites of the temple and palaces of Jerusalem. A succession of bad seasons, drought, hail-storms, mildew, failure of crops, brought dearth and distress. Whilst the wealthier members of the community were able to build themselves houses wainscotted with costly woodwork, perhaps with the very wood designed for the adornment of the new temple, the poorer classes were miserable, and all alike faithless and cynical. 'If,' said they, 'Jehovah really wants His temple built, He will give us the means to do it. Till He makes the sign, there is nothing left for us to do.'[1] Meantime, in the greater world outside, Cyrus, 'the anointed of Jehovah,' had fallen in battle against some of the wild tribes of the North. To those who had hailed him as the one led by the hand of

[1] Hag. i. 2 ff.

Jehovah to the empire of the world his death must have seemed as contradictory as that of Josiah at Megiddo. His successor, Cambyses, has left a name notorious for folly and wickedness. At his sudden death, the impostor who passed himself off as Smerdis, the murdered brother of Cambyses, seized the throne. When he, in his turn, had been murdered, and the great empire was threatened with dissolution, Darius became king and proved himself a born ruler of men, one of the greatest sovereigns in history.

It seems probable that all the stirring and unrest in the world outside awoke once more the slumbering spirit of Hebrew prophecy. In Darius's second year, 520 B.C., whilst the emperor was engaged in subduing revolts in many provinces of his kingdom, *Haggai* came forward to bid his people prepare for the Messianic age. With stirring words he roused them to resume the work of rebuilding the temple. Then, as they were disheartened by the greatness of the task, and the insignificance of their resources as compared with those of Solomon, he declared that all the tumults among the nations were the destined signs preceding the advent of the ideal kingdom of God. Out of them should come forth the glory of Israel, whilst the nations should bring costly offerings of gold and silver to the temple, and Jerusalem enjoy the peace of God. Later he declared that whilst all worldly kingdoms should be overthrown, Israel should remain, and Zerubbabel, precious to God as the signet

ring on a monarch's hand, should be His trusted and chosen representative.[1]

Contemporary with Haggai, and facing the same problems, is *Zechariah*, the author of chapters i.–viii. of the book that bears his name. The chief characteristic of his teaching is its form. His visions are 'a series of conscious and artistic allegories—the deliberate translation into a carefully constructed symbolism of the divine truths with which the prophet was entrusted by his God.'[2] Zechariah's view of the world differs from that of Haggai. It seemed to him that the whole earth was at rest.[3] The strong hand of Darius was quelling the insurrections, and no signs of divine intervention appeared. Nevertheless, he declared unhesitatingly his faith in the coming kingdom. He saw the uplifted horns of the heathen powers battered down by the hammers of the smiths, whilst Jerusalem spreads wide her borders and needs no walls, since Jehovah Himself is round about her like a wall of fire.[4] He saw the high-priest justified and honoured and cheered with the promise of the speedy advent of the Branch of whom the earlier prophets had spoken.[5] He saw the two heads of the community, Joshua and Zerubbabel, standing like two olive-trees, filled with the divine Spirit, whilst above them is Jehovah's

[1] Hag. passim.
[2] G. A. Smith.
[3] Zech. i. 11.
[4] Zech. i. 18 ff.; iii. 4 ff.
[5] Zech. iii. 8; cf. Jer. xxiii. 5; xxxiii. 15.

ever-watchful protection.[1] He saw the finished glory of the temple brought to completion by Zerubbabel. He saw the favoured land of Israel purged both of the sinful and of wickedness itself. Then when exiles from Babylonia arrived with gifts of gold and silver, he had a crown made to be placed on the head of Zerubbabel, who is himself hailed as the Branch, the Messianic king, destined to rule upon his throne, and build the temple, whilst Hebrews from distant lands bring their aid.[2]

Two years later, Zechariah resumed his ministry with a call to civic duty, to judgement and mercy and brotherly kindness. His closing words draw a lovely picture of Jerusalem, with its old men at peace in the streets, and its happy children playing without fear, whilst its scattered citizens are gathered home and its blessedness excites the longing desire of men of every race.[3]

There is much that is pathetic about these visions. Only a few years can have passed by before Zerubbabel died, as he had lived, an obscure Persian subordinate. Outside, the world resounded with the fame of heroic deeds. At Marathon, Miltiades and his Greeks won their immortal victory over the Persian hosts, and drove them in headlong rout into the sea. From

[1] Zech. iv. For a justification of this exposition, see G. A. Smith, or Driver, or Marti, in loco.

[2] This seems the best interpretation of the difficult chapter vi. The R.V. as it stands cannot be right; vide Driver, in loco.

[3] Zech. viii. 4 ff., 20 ff.

this great conflict Europe gained its intellectual and political supremacy. Aeschylus fought in the ranks of the Greeks. Two years later, Leonidas and his Spartans died like heroes at Thermopylae. Xerxes burnt Athens, but the Greeks were unsubdued, and shattered his fleet at the great day of Salamis, the birthday of Euripides. Sophocles danced at the festival which celebrated the victory; Socrates was born a few years later. All that was noblest in art and literature and philosophy began to be gathered into the city of Athens. Jerusalem seemed to lie in a backwater, far out of the central stream of history. Yet still the faith in the kingdom lived on in loyal hearts, 'as chastened yet not killed . . . as having nothing and yet possessing all things.'

It is probable that the closing chapters, lvi.–lxvi., of our Book of Isaiah belong to this period. They are addressed to a community possessing a partial political independence; they lay stress on the details of the temple ritual; whilst the allusions to natural scenery show that they belong to Palestine. Further, they show that at least a partial return of exiled Israelites has taken place. The social wrongs which are so severely censured are similar to those described in Malachi and Ezra and Nehemiah. The many references to a section of the people addicted to curious forms of idolatry may be well understood of the mixed population which had settled in the land during the Exile, including the half-caste Samaritans. Hence the

chapters give a most valuable insight into the highest Hebrew thought of these days.[1] It is plain that their author knew well the chapters xl.–lv. Had chapters lx.–lxii. stood alone they might well have been regarded as the work of Deutero-Isaiah himself. As it is we take them as the work of a successor. This writer passes by in silence the Servant sections. It is clear that he did not think that Israel, the nation, was a guiltless sufferer for the sins of others; a fact which seems to be an additional argument against any national interpretation of those passages. On the contrary, he is sure that it is his people's sinfulness that is keeping back the coming glory, and so sounds his trumpet call to repentance. None the less, his certainty of the future lies deeper down than his consciousness of wrong. He declares that it is the destiny of the religion of Israel to overcome all distinctions, and unite men of every race in common worship, when 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.'[2] Then, after stern denunciations of the cruel self-seeking of the ruling classes, with whom the righteous God can never be at peace, his faith breaks out triumphant as he sees Jehovah Himself coming forth as Redeemer. In some of the most glorious chapters in all literature he shows the rolling back of the dark clouds of sin and the rising glory of Jerusalem.

[1] This view in the main is that of Duhm. It is well represented in English by Dr. Skinner in the *C. B.*

[2] Isa. lvi. 7.

Wealth and homage from every nation come streaming in. Zion's walls are called Salvation, and her gates Praise, while her God is her everlasting light.[1] Glad tidings are proclaimed to Israel, liberty for the captive, comfort for the broken-hearted; the people become God's priests among the nations, nearer to Him than all others, whilst aliens become their servants.[2] The prophet's heart goes out in wistful prayers to see the brightness of this glad day. Following this comes the awful vision of the solitary warrior, stained with the blood of His foes, who declares Himself as Jehovah, the Saviour-God, coming from executing His fierce vengeance on the enemies of Israel.[3] Falling back from these lofty heights to the humbling experiences of the present, the prophet pleads the loving-kindness and compassion of God, and prays Him to rend the heavens, and melt the mountains, and once more by acts of terrible judgement to manifest His power.[4] The prophecy closes with a renewed picture of the blessedness of Israel and the doom of the apostates.[5] As we review these chapters we are struck by the absence of any reference to a personal Messiah. The speaker in chapter lxi., whose words our Lord made the text of His opening sermon in Nazareth, is not the Servant, but the prophet. Finding no help or promise in his people as they were, the prophet looked away

[1] Isa. lx. 18–19.
[2] Isa. lxi. 5, &c.
[3] Isa. lxiii. 1–6.
[4] Isa. lxiii. 7 ff.
[5] Isa. lxvi.

to Jehovah Himself. The strength of the undying witness that through and in Israel the kingdom of righteousness must come, is only the more wonderful. When, like so many before him, this prophet died and saw no fulfilment of his dreams, he had done his work and passed on the torch.

Apart from certain psalms, whose pathetic complaints over the despised and desolate state of the nation appear to reflect the conditions of this period, the few chapters which bear the name of *Malachi* are our sole witness to the progress of thought during the next generation. Writing, probably, some years later than the author of Isaiah lvi.–lxvi., about 460 B.C., he blames his people for a sceptical mistrust of God's continued guidance, and for the offering of cheap and blemished sacrifices on His altar.[1] At the same time heartless divorce of Israelite women, together with marriages with the half-heathen colonists who surrounded them, revealed the slackening of the sense of moral obligation.[2] The priests, forgetting the noble ideals of their order, made by those who had walked with God in peace and uprightness, and turned many away from iniquity, were foremost in shamelessness and wrong.[3] Only a little circle remained of those who were truly loyal to Jehovah, and who clung together in hope.[4] The prophet contrasts the sincerity and earnestness of those who knew none but heathen

[1] Mal. i. 6–8.
[2] Mal. ii. 10 ff.
[3] Mal. ii. 4 ff.
[4] Mal. iii. 16 ff.

gods, and seems already to recognize the truth that 'in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to Him.' [1]

He proclaims in the near future the advent of the Day of Jehovah. Suddenly He will come to His temple. There, as the refiner purges away the dross in the fire, He will purge away the corrupt priests, and all other evil doers.[2] Only the pious remnant of the nation will remain; but when the proud and wicked have been burnt up as stubble, the sun of righteousness will bring healing and strength to the faithful.[3] Malachi sounds a new note in declaring that before this final judgement Elijah, the first of the prophets, will return to renew his work, and seek to restore unity to the divided people, that the ruin may be less complete.[4] Prophecy will summon up her old energy and fire in the return of her most powerful personality, and make one grand effort to convert the nation before the Lord come and strike it with judgement.[5]

As to the future that will follow, Malachi declares the prosperity of the saved people, calling forth the admiring wonder of other nations. He does not, as Haggai and Zechariah, proclaim the downfall of the great world-powers. He looks almost entirely on his own nation, and with deep earnestness sets forth the

[1] Mal. i. 11; cf. Acts x. 35.
[2] Mal. iii. 1 ff.
[3] Mal. iv. 1-2.
[4] Mal. iv. 5-6.
[5] Vide G. A. Smith, in loco.

inevitable consequences of its sin. He is not one of the great creative personalities of Hebrew history; it was his to preserve rather than to create. It was the task of the coming generations to enshrine in institutions some at least of the dearly-won possessions of Israel's chequered history. Malachi stands as the connecting link between the prophetically guided and inspired people of the past and the priest-nation of the future.

II

The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah are our sole historical authorities for the period marked by the founding of Judaism. In the year 458 B.C. Ezra, the priest and scribe, returned to Jerusalem with a commission from Artaxerxes to restore and reform the worship of Jehovah, and to enforce upon the inhabitants obedience to the law. On his arrival he set himself with uncompromising severity against the marriages with heathen women, and insisted that they should be forthwith divorced. A commission was appointed to inquire into the extent of the evil, and the chief offenders promised to submit to Ezra's demands.[1]

At this point there is a gap in the narratives. The curtain rises thirteen years later, when Nehemiah, a devout Jew, is introduced as the favourite cup-bearer of Artaxerxes in his winter palace at Shushan. A company of Jews, including Nehemiah's brother,

[1] Ezra vii.–x.

brought him word that the wall of Jerusalem had been broken down and the people left in great affliction and reproach.[1] As no account remains of any rebuilding of the walls previous to this time, it must be supposed that Ezra had attempted to fortify the city, but had been compelled to desist by the enemies of his rigidly puritan policy, whilst his work had been razed to the ground.

Deeply stirred by this news, Nehemiah obtained from Artaxerxes permission to go to Jerusalem with the rank of governor. There, with an enthusiasm which overcame all obstacles and disdained all threatenings, he roused his fellow countrymen, and in the marvellously short time of fifty-two days completed the rebuilding of the walls. The wonderfully picturesque account of this work, divided systematically amongst the chief families and guilds, reveals Nehemiah as one of the most single-hearted and inspiring personalities of Hebrew history. Turning to social reform, he redressed the wrongs of the poor, who lay at the mercy of the usurers from whom they had been compelled to borrow in order to pay the crushing Persian tribute; and both by example and precept, worked for a happier state.[2]

Following this, a great national convocation was held, at which Ezra, with numerous helpers, read and expounded 'the book of the law of Moses.' The streets were quickly filled with the lamentations of those who

[1] Neh. i. 1–4. [2] Neh. ii.–v.

felt both themselves and their country guilty of transgression against these sacred precepts. With stirring words Nehemiah encouraged them, and bade them believe that 'the joy of Jehovah is your strength.'[1] Next came a great celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, and then, after a day of national humiliation and confession, Nehemiah and the heads of the community bound themselves in solemn covenant to observe and to enforce this holy law.[2]

The length of Nehemiah's residence is not stated. All that appears is that after some time he returned to Persia. In his absence the old evils revived. Returning in 432 B.C. he violently suppressed the malpractices, purified city and temple once more, and banished the grandson of the high-priest, who had married a Samaritan woman. Here the narrative abruptly closes.[3]

The story just outlined is at the present moment severely criticized, and by some questioned altogether. It is no part of our present task to discuss the difficulties which have been raised. It is sufficient to maintain that at this time the people became the people of the law, and to consider the significance of this fact.[4]

The law which was read to the people was essentially the Pentateuch as we now possess it. Before the

[1] Neh. viii. 10. [2] Neh. ix. [3] Neh. xiii. 6–31.

[4] For a brief outline and discussion, see G. A. Smith, *Book of the Twelve Prophets*, vol. ii. pp. 198 ff.

Exile many smaller collections of ritual laws must have been in existence. During the captivity these were collated and enlarged and a complete sketch of the worship of the future constructed. We have seen the beginnings of this process in the ideal commonwealth of Ezekiel. He was one of the first of the school of writers who culminated in Ezra. In their present form these collections of laws form part of the priestly narrative of the Hexateuch, quoted by scholars as P. Of these sections it is true that

> read consecutively, apart from the rest of the narrative, they will be found to form a nearly complete whole, containing a systematic account of the *origines* of Israel, treating with particular fullness the various ceremonial institutions of the Hebrews (Sabbath, Circumcision, Passover, Tabernacle, Sacrifices, Feasts, &c.), and displaying a consistent regard for chronological and other statistical data which entitles it to be considered as the framework of our present Hexateuch.[1]

Hence the noble first chapter of Genesis is derived from this source, a fitting introduction to the whole.

All that we are now concerned to do is to note the outlook on the future of these writers, to see how Israel's faith in its destiny still lived on amongst those who did not share the first return. It may be remarked that the very existence of such writings is full of significance. Far from their home, with everything in their surroundings hostile to faith, these men

[1] Driver, *Genesis*, p. iv.

planned out the laws of life for a future in which they might never share, and trusted the issue to God. The God in whom they believed was the Creator of heaven and earth. Turning disdainfully away from the grotesque myths of Babylon, they taught that at the word of God this wondrous universe sprang into being.

The scheme (of Genesis i.) is made up, first, of a few great antitheses that strike the eye, light and darkness, earth and heaven, dry land and water. Then there is the preparation for life, the vegetation upon the earth; then the preparation for moral and religious life, for that orderly, moral constitution of things which was aimed at from the beginning—the appointing of the heavenly bodies to rule the day and the night, to regulate the great religious seasons, and the fixed terms of life, and man's moral existence. And, finally, the successive creations of all the various orders of life: (1) the aquatic creatures and birds; (2) then the terrestrial creatures; (3) and, lastly, man—in whom God's work of creation returned as it were to God Himself, and He met His own work in fellowship.[1]

The earth having been thus prepared for man's home, these writers go on to trace through Seth and Shem the genealogy of the Hebrew people. Then the story of Abraham is retold, with repeated references to the covenant between him and God. The promise given to Abraham is the everlasting possession of the land of Canaan, whilst kings and nations should be

[1] Dr. A. B. Davidson; see his fine study of this narrative in *O. T. Prophecy*, pp. 199 ff.

numbered amongst his descendants.[1] The same promises are recorded as having been renewed to Jacob.[2]

Passing onwards, these writers tell the story of Moses, to whom, for the first time, the covenant name 'Jehovah' was revealed. Then, after the deliverance from Egypt, all the institutions are described with most scrupulous care which were to make Israel a holy nation, sanctified by the abiding Presence of Jehovah in her midst. The awful sense of the divine holiness is shown again and again by the safeguarding of the tabernacle from all irreverent approach, while the priests receive a dignity quite unknown in earlier days. It may be observed that there is no world-wide outlook here, no expectation of a kingdom or a king before whom all nations should do homage. Hope rests content with the vision of a holy people in a holy land, freed from all defilement, living a peaceful life under the divine protection.

This, then, was the ideal to which Ezra called the people, the ruling aim of loyal Jews from his day to the time when Jerusalem fell before the armies of Titus. To us it may seem narrow and unattractive, yet a sympathetic study reveals the presence of many noble thoughts. Thus, the exactness of the ritual seems needlessly minute, and recalls to us its perversion in the days of Christ. But to the men of this day it meant the earnest striving to make each smallest duty of life an acceptable service to God. In a stately

[1] Gen. xvii. [2] Gen. xxxv. 11-12.

passage Ruskin discloses the inward meaning of all this ritual. He shows that in itself it was dangerous as tending to assimilate the worship of Jehovah to that of the heathen gods, and also needless to people who had in their own traditions far greater proofs of the divine power, and yet he nobly justifies its essential purpose.

Was the glory of the tabernacle necessary to set forth or image His divine glory to the minds of His people? What! purple or scarlet necessary, to the people who had seen the great river of Egypt run scarlet to the sea, under His condemnation? What! golden lamp and cherub necessary, for those who had seen the fires of heaven falling like a mantle on Mount Sinai, and its golden courts opened to receive their mortal lawgiver? What! silver clasp and fillet necessary, when they had seen the silver waves of the Red Sea clasp in their arched hollows the corpses of the horse and his rider? Nay—not so. There was but one reason, and that an eternal one; that as the covenant that He made with men was accompanied with some external sign of its continuance, so the acceptance of that covenant might be marked and signified by men, in some external sign of their love and obedience, and surrender of themselves and theirs to His will; and that their gratitude to Him and continual remembrance of Him, might have at once their expression, and their enduring testimony, in the presentation to Him, not only of the firstlings of the herd and fold, not only of the fruits of earth and the tithe of time, but of all treasures of wisdom and beauty; of the thought that invents, and the hand that labours; of wealth of wood, and weight of stone; of the strength of iron, and the light of gold.[1]

[1] *Seven Lamps*, pp. 26–7.

We have not yet grown beyond that lesson. So long as we are embodied selves will the need for outward expression of common worship remain, and the choicest human gifts find their highest consecration in such devotion.

Further, the emphasis laid upon atonement and purification, and on guilt-offerings and sin-offerings, proved to be wonderfully effective in deepening the sense of sin and so preparing the way for a truer conception of holiness. Whilst many who lived under this law were content to rest there, striving for nothing higher than outward purity, the nobler spirits learned from its ceremonies their inward unworthiness, and yearned for deliverance. To some, the fact that the law was now established meant that the kingdom of God was come at last. But to others, greatest among them Paul, this law was not the goal but only a schoolmaster, to train and discipline and lead to a better Ruler. The view which criticism gives of the slow development of the law in Israel, beginning with the plain and simple provisions of the Book of the Covenant, going on to the centralized worship of Deuteronomy, and culminating in the cast-iron system of the priestly code, makes far more striking Paul's philosophy of history in his Epistle to the Galatians. First, the free and simple worship of childhood, then the long submission to harder and yet harder rules of life, until all self-confidence and self-righteousness was purged away, and then finally the glad return to

freedom of those who had been made fit to enjoy it. In this sense, then, the law took its place in the Witness of Israel, as did the expectation of the suffering Servant. The fact that its significance was so little realized at the time only makes the future unfolding of its purpose more arresting.

Finally, it must not be forgotten that a simple and earnest piety was able to grow, even under the shadow of the law. The many psalms that belong to this period are our best witnesses to that truth. Humble and reverent in tone, dwelling rather on the history of the past than on any brilliant hopes for the future, they breathe the spirit of trust and faith. The law that taught such words as 'I will walk at liberty, for I have sought Thy precepts,' or 'Through Thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way,'[1] was far more than a mere ritual bond.

As we look down the years that follow Nehemiah's residence in Jerusalem, we find little to show the course of the religion. Within the last few years, certain Aramaic papyri found at Elephantine, on the Nile, have, however, thrown unexpected light on the fortunes of the Israelites outside Palestine. A letter has been discovered from the heads of the community at Elephantine, to Bagoas, the Persian governor of Judaea, complaining that their temple of Yahu (Jehovah) had been destroyed by Egyptian troops,

[1] Psa. cxix. 45, 104.

egged on by priests, and begging for permission to rebuild. Thus we learn the extraordinarily interesting fact that the law of the central sanctuary, whose gradual growth we have observed, was not, even at this date, 410–407, recognized universally by worshippers of Jehovah. Into the many unanswered questions as to the origin of this community, whether they were descendants of those who carried off Jeremiah, or Samaritans, or even members of the lost ten tribes—all suggestions made by scholars of repute—we need not now enter.[1] But we see the Persian governor with his seat at Jerusalem. So long as he lived there, all Jewish national expectations were futile. The pious Jew had to devote himself to the worship of his God as, for the time, the one expression of his loyalty.

Further events of this period include, probably, the erection of the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim, and the consequent heightening by those who remained faithful of the wall between themselves and the surrounding peoples. Meanwhile, as the Persian empire began to lose its hold upon its outlying colonies, Palestine formed once more the war-road across which the contending armies marched. Egypt, sometimes independent, sometimes vanquished, was always seething with rebellion against Persia. The lawless armies of mercenaries that passed through Judaea must have

[1] For this, see many recent articles in the *Exp.* and *Exp. T.* and elsewhere.

robbed and outraged in a hundred ways its hapless inhabitants. Towards the close of this period, during the reign of Artaxerxes III, Ochus, 361–338, Judaea became fatally involved in an attempt in which Egypt, Cyprus, and Phoenicia united to throw off the Persian yoke. But Artaxerxes, a soldier and statesman of the highest order, crushed his enemies, and deported many of the Jews to Hyrcania, on the shores of the Caspian Sea. The Jews once more lay helpless at the feet of a conqueror who did not fail to show his displeasure. Then, from the West, came the news of the brilliant victories of a new hero, Alexander the Great, and hope revived once more.

In a previous chapter it has been shown how the conquests of Cyrus called forth the great prophecies of Isaiah xl.–lv. It is probable, though many other suggestions have been made, that the wonderful chapters xxiv.–xxvii. of the same book reflect the hopes of an unknown prophet, who watched the progress of Alexander. Once more the overthrow of the oppressor seemed to mark the coming of the day of Jehovah. The whole earth is described as withering under a curse; vines decay, joy ceases, the city lies desolate. Voices are heard, borne from afar, of those who rejoice in this as a manifestation of Jehovah's power, perhaps the loyal exiles who turn their eyes to Jerusalem and expect her deliverance. But to the prophet such rejoicings are premature. He heaps up images of destruction which is to overtake all earthly kings and

all hostile heavenly powers. Then, with the darkening of sun and moon, Jehovah Himself comes to reign on Mount Zion. The following chapter, xxv., is made up of 'songs and prophecies of redemption,' describing the gladness of the new age, in which suffering and sorrow and even death are done away, and God will wipe away all tears.

Next, the prophet pictures again the ideal future, towards which the faithful are still looking with wistful eyes. Then, thinking of those who in the weary years of the past had died unsatisfied, he declares that the divine power shall raise them even from the dead.[1]

Meantime let the faithful hide themselves till this storm of judgement is overpast, let them learn in secret the lessons of God's forbearing discipline of His people, till with the sound of the trumpet all the scattered exiles shall be gathered home to worship in the holy mountain at Jerusalem.

There is much here on which we might linger, phrases of perfect beauty that haunt the ear like music, above all, the great hope of the resurrection, never before so clearly expressed in the Old Testament, fruitful seed of teaching yet to come. But for our present purpose it is enough to emphasize again the appearance of the enduring, invincible faith in Jehovah's kingdom. 'A stronghold in the day of trouble,' 'an everlasting rock,' keeping in perfect peace those that trust in Him,

[1] Isa. xxvi. 19.

He must come at last, He must reign. Wonderful words to come from an obscure and unknown provincial, at a time of deepest humiliation and distress! As we read we say, 'He left not Himself without witness.'

CHAPTER VII

THE COMING OF THE GREEKS

The greatness of Athens—Philip of Macedonia—Career and conquests of Alexander the Great—Disruption of Alexander's empire—Zechariah ix.–xiv.—The Messianic King—The murder of the good Shepherd—National humiliation and penitence—The coming glory—Relation of the Shepherd to the King—The Book of Jonah—Palestine under the Ptolemies —The Wisdom literature—Job—Proverbs—Ecclesiastes—The Wisdom of the son of Sirach.

THE century which passed so wearily for the Jews in Jerusalem had seen Athens reach the summit of her fame and power. Under Pericles this wonderful republic was supreme both on land and sea. Within the city, adorned during this period with its most stately buildings, men who are world-famous, representing in many ways the highest point of human achievement, came in quick succession. What immortal memories are stirred by such names as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Thucydides, Herodotus, Xenophon, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides!

Yet Athens did not long retain her political supremacy. The long struggle between her and Sparta, together with the disastrous consequences of the defeat

of the expedition against Syracuse, ended in the downfall of the Athenian empire. First Sparta, and then Thebes, became supreme. But the founder of the next great empire came from the hardier tribes of the North. While Athens refused to listen to the passionate warnings of the great orator Demosthenes, Philip of Macedonia swooped down on the divided southern states of Greece, and finally, in 338 B.C., by his victory at the decisive battle of Chaeronea over the combined armies of Athens and Thebes, established himself as head of the Grecian peoples.

Two years later, on Philip's death, the sovereignty passed to his son Alexander, then a young man only twenty years of age. In the twelve years of life that remained to him he crowded warlike deeds enough to fill half a century. In that time he crossed the Hellespont and routed the Persians at Granicus and Issus, 333; captured Tyre after one of the most desperate sieges in history; marched southwards and received the submission of Jerusalem; entered Egypt unopposed, and left the city of Alexandria as his memorial; passed north and east again across the Tigris to rout the remnants of the Persian army at Arbela; and even entered India, and carried his troops on boats down the Indus to the ocean. Though at times violent and unrestrained in passion, the great conqueror was a statesman of comprehensive views. He formed a mighty scheme of a universal empire with entire political equality and religious toleration for the

subject peoples. But in 323 his death at Babylon from fever cut short these schemes, and the empire fell apart and was divided among his generals.

For some years after the conqueror's death Palestine became once more the battlefield of contending armies. In the division of the spoil, Ptolemy obtained Egypt, and Seleucus Syria and the northern provinces stretching eastwards to Babylon and beyond. Ptolemy, however, captured Jerusalem in 320, and, despite many conflicts, the Egyptian rulers held Judaea for more than a century, till 204 B.C. Ptolemy I deported many Jews to Egypt, while in Antioch and many cities of Asia Minor they settled in large numbers, and were admitted to the rights of citizenship. Hence, on the whole, this century was one of peace and prosperity. But in the first twenty years after Alexander's death, the land was again and again cursed by war. It is probable that from these stormy years there came forth again the voice of prophecy, and to these utterances we now turn.

At the close of the prophecies of Zechariah, contained in chapters i.–viii. of the book that bears his name, are six chapters as to whose origin and date the most various opinions have been expressed. By some they are considered as far older than Zechariah, parts of them being placed back in the days of Isaiah, before the fall of Samaria. By others they are set right down in the Maccabean era. It is quite impossible to enter here upon any discussion of these opinions. On

the whole, the weight of argument inclines to the beginning of the Greek period, and so, assuming this position, we proceed to outline their teaching as to the future.[1]

Before Ptolemy had established his rule in Jerusalem, the people of Israel lay, as of old, between two rival kingdoms. To these the old names of Assyria and Egypt were still applied, Assyria in time being shortened in the Greek into Syria.

Looking out from Jerusalem, this prophet declares the divine judgement upon Syria, Phoenicia, and Philistia, so that the ideal borders of the kingdom of Israel may be restored.[2] Then he pictures the coming of the Messianic King, 'just and victorious, lowly and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt, the foal of an ass.'[3] The ass, it need hardly be pointed out, is named in contrast with the war-horse as the beast of peace. At this Ruler's coming, all instruments of war will be destroyed, and He shall reign 'from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.' Then the scattered Israelites, who are still Jehovah's, bound to Him, and still within His blood-sealed covenant, shall be gathered home.[4] If we compare this with Isaiah's Messianic Prince, we note the contrast in the attribute

[1] The older view is admirably expounded by Dr. Findlay, *Books of the Prophets*, vols. i. and ii. On the other side, see G. A. Smith, Driver, &c.

[2] Zech. ix. 1–8.

[3] Zech. ix. 9.

[4] Zech. ix. 11.

of lowliness, suggesting that this Deliverer is to belong 'not to the worldly or godless party dominant in Jerusalem, but to that of the oppressed pious.'

It is probable that the verses that follow, ix. 13–x. 12, where Jehovah Himself appears and uses Israel as the warrior weapons against the enemy, really precede in thought what goes before them. The shepherds of chapter x. verse 3 are the godless foreign tyrants who are to be rooted out, while, like the Red Sea of old, the sea of affliction shall be divided before the ransomed exiles.[1]

Putting, then, the thoughts in order, we see the prophet's hope, fierce judgement on the oppressors, gathering home of the scattered Israelites, the advent of the King, and the inauguration of the reign of peace.

But now the note seems to change altogether. In chapter xi. verse 4 the prophet is commissioned to go as a shepherd to his people, bought and sold by their possessors, as the fortunes of war throw Israel into the hands alternately of the rulers of Syria and Egypt. He goes amongst them with a message of God's coming judgement on the earth; but with his staves called Graciousness and Union, he symbolizes Jehovah's gracious purpose towards His own people, and the coming reunion of all the scattered tribes into a restored kingdom. By divine Providence, evil ruler after evil ruler is removed, perhaps signifying the

[1] Zech. x. 11.

downfall of some of Alexander's generals, a forecast of the fate that awaited them all.[1] But in spite of all, the people remain stubbornly indifferent to the prophet's message. He breaks the staff Graciousness, to show that God's purpose of grace was changed. When he asks them whether they wish him to retain his office or not, they offer him contemptuously the price of a slave. At God's command he casts this into the treasury,[2] to show that it was to Jehovah Himself this insulting price had really been paid in the person of His servant. Then, breaking the staff Union, he leaves them to their fate, and shows them, again in symbol, that a worthless shepherd will arise to rule them.[3]

What, then, has become of the earlier hopes? Has the prophet given up his faith in the coming kingdom, and is the divine purpose finally frustrated? If not, can we track the course of his thought? We believe that the explanation is similar to that which we have given of the fact that in Isaiah, chapters xl.–lv., the glorious visions of the future and the picture of the suffering Servant lie side by side. From his bright dreams the prophet turned to the actual state of the people, and found them altogether unready and unfit for the kingdom. How could this gulf be bridged? If we read his teaching aright, there is a striking likeness between his answer and that of Deutero-Isaiah. Nearly

[1] Zech. xi. 8. [2] Zech. xi. 13, R.V. &c.
[3] Zech. xi. 14–15.

all expositors agree that the verses 7–9 in chapter xiii. are out of place where they stand, and are really the completion of chapter xi. These verses read—

> Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.

Of whom is this said? By some it is referred to the foolish shepherd, whose fate is thus described. That he is Jehovah's fellow means only, in this case, that he is the divine representative, perhaps some faithless high-priest. Hence, on this view, the passage ends in threatening. Only after the worthless shepherd has been removed, and the people purged by repeated chastisement, will a remnant be delivered. But if this is the right explanation, the passage is out of connexion with what follows, and must stand alone, and be assigned, as in fact it is by Nowack and others, to some different author.

We cannot feel that so drastic a course is necessary. On the contrary, we believe that in his despair there dawned upon the prophet the vision of a good Shepherd who should be violently killed. Just as it was said of the righteous Servant that he was 'stricken of God,' so the death of this Shepherd was thought a proof of his guilt. But afterwards his murder should become recognized as a national crime. With bitter grief and tears of remorse they should mourn their guilt. As year by year the heathen mourn in the ritual of their

dying god, so shall the Jews mourn over this representative of Jehovah, and own that in rejecting and piercing him, they have rejected God Himself. Then a fountain for sin and for uncleanness will be opened in Jerusalem. All idolatry and degraded prophecy shall be exterminated and the final redemption come.[1]

Two questions press for answer here. What is the relation between this martyred Shepherd and the lowly King, and how does the prophet himself stand towards this figure? No definite reply can be given. We have seen how, in Deutero-Isaiah, the Servant, victorious over death, seems united in thought with the 'sure mercies of David.' There is no such union suggested here. The lines do not meet as yet, a King who was lowly, a Shepherd slain unjustly, yet bringing penitence and forgiveness through his death; the prophet does not know in whom these two ideals may be blended. If history does know of One, it is surely a striking proof that the prophetic Witness was really slowly preparing for a great reality.

The rest of these chapters contain vivid apocalyptic pictures of the future glory of Jerusalem. There are many references in them, such as the relation of Jerusalem to the surrounding Israelitish populations, which remain dark and unexplained. Many suggestions as to their application may be found in the commentators. But the old hopes remain the same. Jerusalem is again the storm-centre to which the hostile nations

[1] Zech. xii. 10 ff.; xiii. 1–6.

gather. Once it is captured and half its population carried away.[1] Then Jehovah Himself appears. He stands on the Mount of Olives which rends beneath His feet, while through the chasm thus made the fugitives escape. Then begins the Messianic age. There is no more darkness, but one glad perpetual day. Jerusalem remains lifted on high, while the hills of Judah sink to a plain watered by streams of living water that flow from the Holy City. Terrible plagues and self-destructive quarrels will ravage Israel's enemies. But those who survive will come to worship Jehovah the King in Jerusalem.[2] In this final glory we miss the figure of the Messianic King, a fact which is not surprising in the light of the variations in thought which we have marked in Isaiah and Ezekiel. It is with them, as so much later with Paul, the final goal of history, 'that God may be all in all.'[3] But it would be as unsafe to argue from their silence that they had outgrown their former teaching, as it would be absurd to maintain that in Paul's great resurrection chapter there is any belittling of his Master. They uttered many words of hope whose fulfilment they never saw. But in face of Greece, as of Assyria or Babylonia or Persia, they still proclaimed with dauntless faith that their God was the one supreme and righteous Ruler of all mankind, and that His kingdom must come.

[1] Zech. xiv. 2.
[2] Zech. xiv. 4 ff.
[3] 1 Cor. xv. 28.

One other voice from this period, or a little later, must be listened to before we continue the history, that of the author of the small but priceless Book of *Jonah*, of which Cornill has said, 'I cannot read, no nor even speak of this marvellous book without my heart beating quicker and my eyes filling with tears.' The prophet of Zech. ix.–xiv., despite his picture of the reign of the lowly King, spoke with fierce gladness of the victorious Jews drenched in the blood of their foes.[1] If a portion of the heathen world escaped the doom of the rest, they must become Jews and pay their ritual dues. But the Book of Jonah breathes throughout a gentler spirit. The rude sailors, the teeming crowds of Nineveh, the little children, the helpless cattle, are all pitied by Jehovah, the Maker of them all. In the exquisite lesson drawn from the gourd, whose fate he had pitied, the sullen prophet is taught that all human compassion is only a reflection of far deeper compassion in God. In one of the most perfect endings in all literature we are left with the vision of the Creator brooding over the world's great cities, and with the unanswered question, 'Should not I have compassion?'—must not God be pitiful if He is great? The further thought of the book that the Israelite was meant to be the missionary of the true God to the heathen world was not learnt by the people as a whole till long after. But this tiny book has a real and noble place in the Witness of Israel.

[1] Zech. ix. 15, &c.

The comparatively peaceful years during which Israel was under the rule of the Ptolemies have left few notable incidents to reward the search of the historian. For a time Alexandria had succeeded to the place of Athens as the intellectual centre of the world. Here the Jews formed an extremely numerous and influential community. According to Philo, there were in his day, about 70 B.C., no less than a million Jews living there. The meeting there of Jewish thought and Greek philosophy produced results of the highest importance, though for the most part they lie outside the scope of this book. In Palestine itself, in Galilee, on the east of the Jordan, and on the sea-coast, Greek cities were founded, and, as the Greek language became universally known, the thoughts and ideals which it expressed exerted a world-wide influence. In the Exile the loyal Israelite had met the foreign influences away from his home, and had proudly refused to be conquered by them. Deutero-Isaiah is the greatest illustration of such a victory. But now these influences invaded the Holy Land itself, and in far more subtle and attractive ways threatened to destroy the ancient faith.

The literary expression of this period is found most fully in the wisdom literature of the Old Testament—*Job*, *Proverbs*, and *Ecclesiastes*. We note at once how from these books the national hopes are altogether absent. In *Job* the problem of the suffering of the righteous is discussed with marvellous power; but Job

is not an Israelite, nor is there any thought that his sorrows are borne for others. The one solution that is offered is that man should humble himself before the transcendent majesty of God. The soul that recognizes the greatness of God and believes that all this glorious universe is controlled by Him, may trust Him even where it cannot understand. Similarly in the *Proverbs*, made up of many collections from different centuries, but probably now gathered into a book, there is no teaching as to the destiny of the nation. The wise men know the greatness of the power of Eastern kings for good or evil, but counsel the living of a quiet and submissive life. 'My son, fear thou Jehovah and the king: and meddle not with them that are given to change.'[1] This is a long way from the king-making prophets of earlier days. The book as a whole is shrewd in its counsel and keen in its analysis of character. It is marked by a reverent and earnest piety, and the keynote of the whole is, 'The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.'[2] The grand personification of wisdom, culminating in chapter viii., with wisdom as the firstborn of the Creator, delighting in the sons of men, is noble and inspiring in itself, and of great importance in the development both of Alexandrine and Christian theology. We find here a truer conception of God than ever dawned upon a Greek thinker. But, as in Job, the teaching is not

[1] Prov. xxiv. 21. [2] Prov. ix. 10.

concerned with the future of the Hebrew nation; for the time the hopes of prophecy seemed to be asleep.

We may say the same of *Ecclesiastes.* To this rather sombre mind the universe has no goal and mankind no destiny. Suns rise and set, winds veer and change, rivers flow ceaselessly into the sea, the daily round is endlessly repeated. Man is cribbed and confined, and can find no escape from the chains that bind him. The writer is without the strong personal sense of communion with God which taught other men to say, 'Nevertheless I am continually with Thee.' And yet in spite of all he believes in God! Cornill says strikingly that Old Testament piety never won a greater victory than in this book. Here is a man who sees all the world's misery and unsolved riddles as clearly as a modern pessimist. He never shrinks from drawing the strict consequences of his thoughts. Yet the teaching of his childhood has so firm a hold on him that he never even dreams of suggesting the obviously simplest solution, and denying the existence of God, or declaring the world to be the sport of blind chance.[1]

There is no need to assume, as is sometimes done, that the writer was a student of the Epicurean philosophy. The conditions of life in his day and his own early training are a sufficient explanation of the book. Its place in our canon of Scripture is justified by the thought that the Bible is a universal book meant to reflect all the changing moods of our complex human

[1] Cornill, *Einleitung in das A. T.*, p. 280.

nature. But in the river of revelation these chapters seem to lie in some quiet and shadowy backwater, far removed from the central stream.

For the time immediately before the troubles that ended in the Maccabean rising there is another witness in the Book of Jesus, the son of Sirach, preserved in the Apocrypha under the name *Ecclesiasticus.* The date of this book is guaranteed to us by the author's grandson, who translated it into Greek in the year 132 B.C., and by its glowing praise of the great high-priest Simon (*circ.* 218–198), who restored the temple.[1] The writer shows that in his time our 'minor prophets' had been gathered together in a collection of twelve.[2] He delights in the gorgeous ritual of the law, and dwells with enthusiasm on the worship. He has left a vivid picture of the scribes travelling in foreign lands in quest of knowledge, meditating in the law of the Most High, seeking out the wisdom of all the ancients, occupied in prophecies.[3] But what concerns us here is his view of the destiny of his nation. He mourns the lowly state of his people and prays for deliverance from oppression, and for the fulfilment of the ancient promises made to Abraham and confirmed to Isaac and Jacob—

Gather all the tribes of Jacob together, and take them for Thine inheritance as from the beginning. O Lord, have mercy upon the people that is called by Thy name.

[1] Ecclus. l. [2] Ecclus. xlix. 10.
[3] Ecclus. xxxix. 1–5.

and upon Israel, whom Thou didst liken unto a firstborn. Have compassion upon the city of Thy sanctuary, Jerusalem, the place of Thy rest. Fill Sion, exalt Thine oracles, and fill Thy peoples with Thy glory. Give testimony unto those that were Thy creatures in the beginning, and raise up the prophecies that have been in Thy name.[1]

It is the omissions that strike us here. The writer does indeed pray 'Crush the heads of the rulers of the enemies, that say, there is none but we,'[2] but he makes no mention of the terrors of the day in which his prayer may be answered. He does not name the Messiah or the coming King, and has no message as to immortality. He knows that wisdom, coming forth from the Most High, found her dwelling-place in the beloved city, Jerusalem,[3] but there is little trace of any narrowly national spirit, and one could hardly suppose such a man in sympathy with the militant Puritanism of Ezra.

As a whole, the book confirms the view we have taken of the period of its origin. There was a real and sincere piety, but hope for the future had sunk into vague anticipations of brighter times to come. Sometimes, as the older prophecies were read, hope began to revive, but faith was not strong enough to produce any national movement. Yet, once more, as in the days long past, foreign oppression was to show that the old heroic qualities were not dead, only sleeping.

[1] Ecclus. xxxvi. 11–15. [2] Ecclus. xxxvi. 10.
[3] Ecclus. xxiv. 11.

CHAPTER VIII

THE AGE OF THE MACCABEES

The growth of the Roman power—Palestine under the Seleucidae—Greek influences—Antiochus Epiphanes attempts to exterminate the worship of Jehovah—The revolt of Mattathias—Victories of Judas Maccabaeus—Reconsecration of the temple—The Book of Daniel—Visions of the future—All centre on the attempt of Antiochus to destroy the worship—Contrast with the traditional explanation—The triumph of the kingdom the goal of history—Extra-canonical books—The Book of Enoch—The dream-visions—Sketch of the history from Judas to Herod—Illustrative literature—The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs—Messianic hopes centred on Levi—The *Similitudes* of Enoch—The Son of Man—His task of judgement—The Psalms of Solomon—Hope of the Davidic King revived—Hopes of the pious at the birth of Christ—Zechariah, Simeon, Anna—Conclusion—Essential universality of the religion of Israel—Is modern Judaism its true heir, or Christianity?

THE years whose history we have been sketching had been marked by the rise of a new power in the West. As far back as the middle of the 5th century, while Ezra and Nehemiah were making the Jews the people of the law, the famous code known as the Laws of the Twelve Tables had been drawn up at Rome, engraved on copper, and

set up in the Forum for all to see. Since that time Rome had established herself as mistress of Italy; and by the conquest of Pyrrhus had taught the Greeks that the 'barbarians' of the West were henceforth a power to be reckoned with. Before, however, she could exert her influence in the East, the life-and-death struggle with Carthage had to be fought out. Attacked on her own soil by Hannibal, one of the greatest of the world's soldiers, Rome suffered crushing defeats at Lake Trasimene and at Cannae. It was not till 207 B.C., at the famous battle of the Metaurus, that the tide finally turned, and it was decided that an Aryan and not a Semitic people should govern Europe. Meanwhile, in Palestine, the rule of the Ptolemies was finally ended in 204, and in 198 B.C. Jerusalem fell into the hands of Antiochus the Great of Syria without a struggle.

For a time the condition of the Jews under these new rulers was favourable. Many of them settled as colonists in the new cities founded by Antiochus; and the kings themselves are said to have contributed to the cost of the sacrifices at Jerusalem.[1] But presently loyalty to the political rulers began to be shown by a slavish adoption of their customs. When Antiochus Epiphanes began his reign in 175, these tendencies grew so strong that Jerusalem almost became a Greek city. The loyal high-priest, Onias, was deposed, and the semi-heathen Jason installed in his place. Greek dress was freely worn; the priests at the temple left

[1] 1 Macc. iii. 3.

their sacred duties to join in the Greek sports; and Jason sent envoys to Tyre with offerings for a sacrifice to Hercules. When Antiochus visited Jerusalem in 172, he was welcomed, in Greek style, with a torchlight procession. The pious party, henceforth known as the *Chasidim*, seemed dispirited and helpless.

Sordid disputes about the high-priesthood, which Menelaus had now obtained through bribery, brought on Jerusalem the wrath of the king. A three days' massacre in the streets destroyed many hundreds of the citizens. Then Antiochus, thwarted in his designs on Egypt by the Roman envoy who, according to the well-known story, drew with his staff a circle in the sand around him, and bade him there and then decide to leave Egypt or to fight Rome, returned full of hatred to Palestine, and in 168 B.C., made his mad attempt to destroy the Jewish faith. Various explanations have been given of this policy. The writer of 1 Maccabees suggests that it was part of a general plan to secure religious solidarity throughout the whole kingdom, and to enforce Greek polytheism on all the subject races.[1] If so, it may have been that Antiochus, ambitious of founding an empire strong enough to cope with Rome, chose this course as the shortest way to unity. Others have supposed that he suspected the Chasidim of intriguing with Egypt against his rule. But, whatever his purpose may have been, he roused against himself an opposition fiercer than he had ever dreamed.

[1] 1 Macc. i. 41.

The decree of uniformity was ruthlessly enforced. Jerusalem was seized and sacked, and a strong fortress, garrisoned by Syrian troops, commanded both temple and city. Jewish worship was abolished. The observance of Jewish rites was made punishable with death. Finally an altar to Zeus Olympios was erected on the great altar of burnt-offering itself. Yet when the officers of Antiochus went through the land to coerce the inhabitants they found many who were ready to die for their faith. Noble stories of heroism illumine these dark days; of those who 'were tortured not accepting their deliverance'; of mothers who cheered on their sons to be faithful unto death.[1] Finally, at the village of Modein, in the Shephelah, was found the famous family that led the way to victory, and for the last time established Judaea as an independent state.

Mattathias, father of Judas Maccabaeus, was a man of priestly family, high in influence in his native town. When the king's officer called him to sacrifice to Zeus he refused with indignant words. Then, deeply stirred at the sight of a Jew going forward to do homage, he killed both the renegade and the officer, and with his sons fled to the mountains.[2] Joined there by groups of like-minded patriots, they went through the land destroying all idolatrous symbols,

> and smote sinners in their anger and lawless men in their wrath. . . . And they rescued the law out of the hand of

[1] See the stories given in 2 Maccabees.

[2] 1 Macc. ii. 15–28.

the Gentiles, and out of the hand of the kings, neither suffered they the sinner to triumph.[1]

Mattathias died in 166, and left Judas, his third son, to take his place as leader. Few struggles can have seemed more hopeless at the outset than that on which this little band of patriots now entered. They had arrayed against them not only the military power of Syria, but also many of their own countrymen, who were tired of isolation, and wishful to accept the religion and the culture of the civilized world. Yet Judas won victory after victory, routed the chosen generals of Antiochus, regained possession of Jerusalem, though the citadel remained uncaptured, and, on December 25, 165, rededicated the purged temple, where sacrifice to Jehovah was offered once more.[2]

It is now generally received that to this period we owe the last, and certainly one of the greatest and most important, books of the Old Testament, the Book of *Daniel*. The patriot author of this book was one in whom the old fire of prophecy was kindled once more, so that he painted in glowing colours the glorious future. Building upon stories handed down by tradition of the experiences of Daniel four centuries before in Babylon, the prophet expounded for the men of his own day his great thesis that all history has been, and still is, controlled by the God of Israel, and is leading up to a destined end. We need not be astonished that imaginative writing of this sort should find its place in

[1] 1 Macc. ii. 44–48. [2] 1 Macc. iv. 52–53.

the Bible. When we consider the Eastern love for stories, witnessed to so constantly in the teaching of our Lord, we expect to find the same method of instruction in the Old Testament as well. It may well be one of the 'divers forms' in which God spake unto the fathers. At any rate, if sober examination of what this book actually contains leads to such a conclusion we may reverently admit that God has not disdained to use such a method, and must not shut our minds against the truth because of any personal prejudices.[1]

[1] Dr. C. H. H. Wright, a veteran scholar, who has just died, defended to the last the older view, that the book belongs to the 6th century B.C. But in order to do this he is obliged to assume that chapters xi. and xii. have been freely altered by a writer living in Maccabean times. On chapter xi. he remarks, 'The chapter is in the main an explanatory paraphrase, and not the original prophecy.' Again, speaking of the 'vast and profound influence' which the book exerted from the times from Antiochus Epiphanes downwards, he remarks, 'It may be safely admitted that the closing prophecy of Daniel *in its present form* cannot be proved to go back to an earlier period than 164 B.C.' Dr. Wright supports his view, that the additions to these chapters are of later date than the rest of the book, by linguistic arguments which do not seem at all conclusive. But his concessions should at least show that the question of the date of the book as a whole is not a question of faith or rationalism, but one of sound judgement. Dr. Driver's Introduction and Commentary in the Cambridge Bible Series gives a careful and reverent exposition of the position we have adopted. A similar view was taken by Westcott in his article on Daniel in Smith's Bible Dictionary. Dr. Orr admits the difficulty of chapter xi., and seems prepared to grant a redaction of that chapter in Maccabean times, but still wishes to adhere to the traditional interpretation, hardly a tenable position. His suggestion (*The Bible under Trial*, p. 140, &c.) that the modern position has been overthrown by archaeology should be compared with Dr. Driver's notes on the history, especially the remarks about Belshazzar, pp. 28, &c. His remark that 'the "linguistic" objection

The prophet's pictures of the future are contained in the story of Nebuchadrezzar's dream in chapter ii., and the vision of the four beasts in chapter vii. In chapter viii. a further vision of the contest between the ram and the he-goat, with the subsequent coming forth of the little horn, culminates in the desecration of the sanctuary and the interruption of the daily sacrifice for 2,300 half-days. This vision is explained by the angel[1] as referring to the overthrow of Persia by Greece, the subsequent splitting up of the Greek empire in four, doubtless on Alexander's death, and then the coming of a king of hard countenance, and a master in dissimulation, who must be Antiochus Epiphanes. In chapter ix. Jeremiah's prophecy of seventy years' captivity is expounded as meaning seventy weeks of years, divided into seven, sixty-two, and one. At the end of the first seven weeks, 'an anointed one, a prince,' was to come.[2] Then, for sixty-two weeks, i.e. 434 years, the city was to remain rebuilt, though in straitened times. Then, at the beginning of the last week, 'the anointed' one would

is not more potent,' because Greek words may have been known in the East earlier than is sometimes supposed, is a surprising understatement of the facts. A remark by Dr. Sayce, who is certainly no friend to the ruling school in criticism, may be added: 'In the eyes of the Assyriologist the use of the word Kasdim (Chaldeans) in the Book of Daniel would alone be sufficient to indicate the date of the work with unerring certainty.' That is really what *Archaeology as Searchlight* reveals.

[1] Dan. viii. 20 ff.

[2] Dan. ix. 25 ff.

be cut off, and the people of an unnamed prince should destroy city and sanctuary. For half the last week the sacrifice and oblation should cease. Finally the oppressor should meet his destined doom.

The last three chapters contain an outline sketch of the history from Cyrus downwards to Antiochus Epiphanes. Many events during that period are described quite unambiguously. There is no need to dwell on this, as it is generally admitted by commentators of every school. Once more, the chief crime alleged against the impious king is the profanation of the sanctuary and the cutting off of the burnt-offering.[1] Yet the oppressor shall meet his doom, and the dead Israelites be raised, for glory or for shame, in the final kingdom.[2] The book ends with a further prophecy defining the duration of the persecution.[3]

As we look back over this series of visions, one thing seems certain, that they all culminate in the same event which, in each case, precedes the final manifestation of divine power. That event can hardly have been anything but the sacrilegious persecution of Antiochus. The prophet's own exposition in chapter viii. seems decisive on that point. Hence we conclude that while the persecution was raging he was raised up to strengthen the courage of his own people, and that he did, with invincible faith, predict the overthrow of Antiochus.

[1] Dan. xi. 31. [2] Dan. xii. 2. [3] Dan. xii. 11–12.

The chief alternative exposition to this is one that has had so long a history in the Christian Church that it cannot be passed over in silence. The seventy weeks, or 490 years, of chapter ix. are supposed to culminate in Christ. The inaccurate rendering of verses 25–7 in the Authorized Version is a striking proof how far presuppositions may determine a translation. Really the only thing in favour of this explanation is the fact that reckoning back 486–7 years ($69\frac{1}{2} \times 7$) from 29 A.D., the date of the Crucifixion, we arrive at 458 B.C., the date of Ezra's mission. Not only, however, do we know of no decree to build the walls at that time, but further, we know of no crisis at all three and a half years after the Crucifixion. Moreover, the destruction of the temple by Titus, 70 A.D., which is supposed to be predicted in verse 26, falls right outside the 490 years altogether. Indeed, one is convinced that the fact that any case at all has been made out for a reference here to our Lord's death is a coincidence in numbers and nothing more. It is not denied that no completely satisfactory account has been given, on any theory, of these 490 years. Other interpretations suggest either that the prophet is reckoning in round numbers, or has made somewhere a chronological error. But it cannot be too earnestly pointed out that if we suppose that a date in the distant future had been supernaturally revealed to the prophet, then the smallest possibility of error must be excluded. This seems fatal to the older interpretation.

But, on the other hand, if the prophet, like others before him, is speaking in round numbers, then the exactness or otherwise of the numbers makes no difference to the essential meaning of the prophecy. We cannot pursue this matter further, save to repeat that the interpretation of these verses is not at all a matter of faith, but one of judgement. We do not deny the possibility of such exact prediction as is sometimes supposed to exist here. But we claim that it has been read into the text, and is not really to be discovered there.

Let us now return to describe the visions of the future that the prophet saw. He saw the great pageant of history moving onwards, while nation after nation climbed to the seat of power; but at the end he declared that all these must pass away, and the kingdom of God be set up. The triumph of the kingdom is the goal of history. In chapter ii. the nations are represented as parts of a great image, fashioned by human art of gold and silver, brass and iron and clay. The kingdoms are Babylon, Media, Persia, Greece. Then came a stone cut out without hands—a kingdom made by no human artificer, but shaped by God Himself—which smote the image into fragments, and then grew to a mountain which filled the whole earth. In chapter vii. the same four nations are represented by beasts—the lion, the bear, the leopard, and the terrible nameless beast of verse 7. Out of this last proceeded the little horn, with its proud and impious boasts.

There follows a majestic scene of judgement. Attended by thousands of His heavenly hosts, God Himself appears, and the empires of the beasts are destroyed. Then, on the clouds of heaven, comes one like unto a son of man, and on him an everlasting and universal dominion is bestowed. This figure like the son of man is explained in verse 27 to represent the kingdom of the saints of the Most High. In contrast with the bestial kingdoms of the heathen, this final kingdom is to be human and spiritual; and, 'coming on the clouds of heaven,' in contrast with the nations that 'rose out of the sea,' it is to be ushered in by God's own power, and not by any earthly violence or force.

We need not trace further the limitations which are prophesied to the tyranny of Antiochus, save to remark again how in the closing vision the faith of the prophet declares the resurrection of the Israelites who have died, raised from the dusty ground either to everlasting life, or to everlasting abhorrence.

Looking back over these visions we see how gloriously this prophet bore his witness to the certainty of Jehovah's victory, and how triumphantly his faith was vindicated. Doubtless he thought the kingdom would come as soon as Antiochus was overthrown. But in this he was only like all his predecessors, like Isaiah, who thought of the child Immanuel as already conceived; or Haggai or Zechariah, who hoped so much from Zerubbabel. They saw the promise, and hailed it from afar, and their faith destroyed time and

annihilated distances. But each in his own day declared with new emphasis the Witness of Israel, that God's kingdom must prevail.

For our guide through the interval of more than one hundred and fifty years which separates the writing of the Book of Daniel from the birth of our Lord, we must take the Jewish books that lie outside the canon of the Old Testament. During this time two great streams of influence, Persian and Greek, were flowing into and mingling with Hebrew thought. We who believe that the Spirit of God is always at work in the world, and that all that is pure and good in every religion descends from the Father of lights, may not neglect or disparage the truths that were emphasized here. The faith in immortality, about which Plato had written so nobly, and which had been taught so strongly by Zoroastrianism, here became the possession of the Jewish people as a whole. Hence the belief in the kingdom of God became severed from much that was merely national and particular, and the way was prepared for the universal teaching of the gospel. This period has been till recent years much neglected by Christian scholars. Yet it is becoming more and more evident that without a knowledge of it a sound understanding of much of the New Testament is not possible.

Here all that can be done is to outline the teaching as to the coming kingdom and the person of the Messiah. This last hope in particular, which had sunk

into the background during the last two centuries, was now revived once more.[1]

The first work to which reference must be made is the *Book of Enoch*. This book was well known to the writers of the New Testament, and is directly quoted in the Epistle of Jude. It was held in high esteem by the Christian fathers till towards the close of the 3rd century A.D., and regarded by some of them as having the authority of Scripture.[2]

It is supposed to contain the words of Enoch, who is described as 'a righteous man, whose eyes were opened by God, that he might see a vision of the Holy One in the heavens.'[3] Jewish legend regarded Enoch as the father of arithmetic and astronomy, and there is much curious speculation and folk-lore in the book. Critics consider that as it stands it is by many different hands; but there is one section, the *dream-visions* of chapters lxxxiii.–xc., which Dr. Charles decisively assigns to the time of the

[1] A study of the thought is given in Dr. Fairweather's article on the 'Development of Doctrine' in Hastings' D.B. vol. v.; more fully in his recent book, *The Background of the Gospels*. Dr. R. H. Charles's many books on the period, together with his articles in the D.B. and Enc. Biblica, are indispensable for the serious student. Bousset's *Die Religion des Judentums im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter* is a mine of wealth. Popular works on the history are Waddy Moss, *From Malachi to Matthew;* Fairweather, *From the Exile to the Advent;* and Shailer Mathews, *A History of New Testament Times in Palestine*. The First Book of Maccabees is now edited in the Cambridge Bible Series.

[2] See the reference in Charles's edition, pp. 38–41.

[3] Enoch i. 2.

Maccabean struggle. Here there is given a sketch of the history from Adam to the final judgement and the establishment of the Messianic kingdom. As in Daniel, men are symbolized by animals. The faithful of the latter days are represented by sheep, the Gentiles by wild beasts and birds of prey. The coming of Judas Maccabaeus is described as the appearance of a sheep with a great horn which does many valiant deeds.[1] Finally all the hostile nations, 'eagles and vultures and ravens and kites . . . and all the sheep of the field,'[2] assemble together against him for the last conflict. In this extremity God Himself comes down.

> And I saw till the Lord of the sheep came unto them and took the staff of His wrath into His hand and smote the earth so that it was rent asunder, and all the beasts and the birds of the heaven fell away from the sheep, and sank in the earth and it closed over them.[3]

Then the sheep are given a great sword, with which they drive their enemies before them. Afterwards 'in the pleasant land' the judgement throne is set, and the Lord of the sheep takes His seat. The sealed books are opened, and the fallen angels, with the angels who had failed in their charge to keep Israel, are hurled into the abyss of fire, whilst the blinded sheep, the apostates, are likewise cast into Gehenna.[4] Next follows the removal of the old Jerusalem and the

[1] Enoch xc. 9.

[2] i.e. the apostate Jews of the Hellenistic party.

[3] Enoch xc. 18.

[4] Enoch xc. 19–26.

setting up of the new, in which is the Lord of the sheep. Then all of the Gentiles who are left alive turn and do homage to the sheep, and the sheep of the dispersion are gathered home—

> And all that had been destroyed and dispersed, and all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the heaven assembled in that house, and the Lord of the sheep rejoiced with great joy because they were all good and had returned to His house.[1]

Lastly there is born 'a white bull,'[2] by which doubtless the Messiah is meant, and all the members of the kingdom are transformed and brought back to the primitive righteousness of Eden, where Adam had been symbolized by a white bull.[3] There are many things that arrest our notice here. The certainty of the coming kingdom is proclaimed, but there is a great advance in the teaching of future rewards and punishments. The converted heathen find a welcome in the house of the Lord of the sheep, which is 'large and broad and very full.'[4] The figure of the Messiah is vague, and he does not appear at all till the work is over and the victory achieved. This is the earliest appearance of the Messiah in non-canonical literature. These chapters are of very great value as the work of a contemporary of the author of Daniel.

It is now necessary to return to the history following the reconsecration of the temple by Judas. For a

[1] Enoch xc. 33.
[2] Enoch xc. 37.
[3] Enoch lxxxv. 3.
[4] Enoch xc. 36.

brief period he was master of Judaea, and relieving the besieged garrisons of his faithful fellow countrymen in Gilead and Galilee, brought the survivors to Jerusalem.[1] But the power of Syria was not yet broken, and in 162 Judas was compelled to deliver over the city, the Syrians, however, engaging to protect the Jews in their national worship and to respect their laws.[2] Alcimus, a man of Aaronic descent but of Hellenistic sympathies, was appointed as high-priest. Thus the war for religious freedom was over, and the attempt to destroy the worship of Jehovah had failed. But the Maccabees were not content with this, and, whilst many of the pious party now deserted them, they continued to strive for national independence. After one more glorious victory over the Syrian Nicanor, Judas was crushed by overwhelming numbers, and died like a hero at Elasa, 161.[3] His brother Jonathan lived at first the life of an outlaw, but ultimately by a triumph of diplomacy obtained possession of Jerusalem, and in 153 assumed the high-priesthood. In 143 the last and perhaps the ablest of this famous family of brothers, Simon, succeeded to his brother's office, and by capturing the Syrian citadel of Jerusalem, which had remained unsubdued through all these years, really became head of an independent nation. Then in solemn conclave, attended by priests, people, princes of the people and elders, Simon was appointed 'leader

[1] 1 Macc. v. 21-46, &c. [2] 1 Macc. vi. 60.
[3] 1 Macc. ix.

and high-priest for ever, until there should arise a faithful prophet.'[1] The writer of 1 Maccabees gives a glowing picture of the happiness enjoyed under Simon's rule. He is one of the most attractive figures in Hebrew history.

Simon's successor, John Hyrcanus, 135–105, largely increased the Jewish territory and had an outwardly prosperous reign. But in his time marked dissensions of thought made themselves felt, which are so important for the understanding of the remaining literature that we must stay to consider them.

In the days of Judas there had been, roughly speaking, three parties, the Hellenizers, the Maccabeans, and the Chasidim or pious. So long as religious liberty and the sanctity of the law were in question, the Chasidim stood by the Maccabeans. But when Jonathan assumed the high-priesthood, and high-priest and king became one, and spiritual ends were made subservient to worldly ambition, then the Chasidim began to separate themselves and to resent the rule of the new dynasty. From this time this party becomes known as 'the Pharisees,' the separated ones.

On the other hand, the Hellenizers, supporters of the old aristocratic high-priesthood, and known as Sadducees (derived from Zadok, Solomon's priest), now attached themselves to the Maccabean rulers, and ardently supported their ambitious policy.

The Pharisees had an inward contradiction in their

[1] 1 Macc. xiv. 41.

thought which they could not reconcile. To them the ideal state was a theocracy in which there was no room for a king. On the other hand, they had as an inheritance from the prophets the ideal of the perpetual kingdom of David. The real solution in a kingdom not of this world, reaching far beyond any purely national limits, was outside their vision. Hence they gave themselves more and more passionately to the task of preserving all that was national and particular in their faith. The result was the fanatical patriotism of the final struggle with Rome.

John Hyrcanus and his successors allied themselves with the Sadducees. Under Alexander Jannaeus, 104–78, the breach between the parties resulted in civil war, in which 50,000 Jews are said to have perished and 800 Pharisees to have been crucified. Alexander's wife, Alexandra, who succeeded him, made peace with the Pharisees, but the disputes between her sons, Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus, brought down the Romans upon Palestine. After a desperate resistance the temple was stormed and taken by Pompey in June, 63, and although Hyrcanus was allowed to remain as high-priest, the independence of the Jewish nation was at an end.

A very few lines suffice to tell the rest of the story. Hyrcanus was a mere puppet in the hands of Antipater, the Idumaean, the father of Herod the Great. Antipater's subservience to Rome roused the Jewish spirit once more, and Antigonus, last of the Maccabean

dynasty, succeeded for two years in establishing himself as king at Jerusalem. But in 37 B.C. Herod, supported by the Romans, once more took the sacred city by storm. Antigonus was captured and executed, and Herod assumed the kingship, reigning from 37–4 B.C. During his reign, marked by his splendid reconstruction of the temple, Judaea was peaceful and prosperous. But his vengeful and jealous nature wrought terrible havoc in his own family, and he became the murderer both of his wife and his sons.

From the mass of literature belonging to this period we may select three works as showing the development of Jewish hopes for the future. The first of these, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,* has had a romantic literary history. Dr. Charles has given good reason for showing that it was well known to our Lord and to the writers of the New Testament. In its ethical teaching it often rises very high. One may quote the words about forgiveness—

> Love ye one another from the heart; and if a man sin against thee, speak peaceably to him, and in thy soul hold not guile; and if he repent and confess forgive him. . . . But if he be shameless and persist in his wrong-doing, even so forgive him from the heart, and leave to God the avenging.[1]

We can see at once how welcome such words must have been to those who were baptized into the spirit of Jesus. Yet very early in the Christian era the

[1] T. Gad. vi. 3–7.

book fell into disrepute, and after suffering many interpolations practically disappeared, till, in the 13th century, Robert Grosseteste, the great Bishop of Lincoln, published a Latin translation, which at once acquired great popularity. Since then many scholars have dealt with it; but we owe what seems likely to be the final solution of its problems to the unremitting labours of Dr. Charles, from whose edition the references of this chapter are taken.[1]

Dr. Charles shows that the main portion of the book must have been written during the reign of John Hyrcanus before his breach with the Pharisees. Its author, an ardent admirer of Hyrcanus, and at the same time a loyal adherent of the Chasidim, believed that the peace and prosperity of this reign showed that the Messianic age was already come, and hailed the king, who combined in himself the threefold office of prophet, priest, and king, as the long-looked-for Messiah.

Seeing that the Maccabean family did not belong to the tribe of Judah it was necessary to transfer the ancient hopes from Judah to Levi. Hence we have the remarkable fact that for a generation the Jewish Messianic hope was centred in Levi. We may quote Dr. Charles's summary of the prerogatives and powers of this Messiah.

He was to be free from sin; to walk in meekness and

[1] *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, translated from the editor's Greek text, by R. H. Charles. A. & C. Black, 1908.

righteousness; to establish a new priesthood under a new name, and also be a mediator for the Gentiles; likewise he was to be a prophet of the Most High; to be a king over all the nation; to war against Israel's national enemies and against Beliar and the powers of wickedness, and deliver the captives taken by him, even the souls of the saints; to open Paradise to the righteous; and give the saints to eat of the tree of life. Moreover, he should give the faithful power to tread upon evil spirits and bind Beliar, who should be cast into the fire, and sin should come to an end.[1]

We have only space for one fine passage in illustration, taken from the Testament of Levi:—

Then shall the Lord raise up a new priest.
And to him all the words of the Lord shall be revealed;
And he shall execute a righteous judgement upon the earth for a multitude of days.
And his star shall arise in heaven as of a king,
Lighting up the light of knowledge as the sun the day,
And he shall be magnified in the world.

. . . . . .

The heavens shall be opened,
And from the temple of glory shall come upon him sanctification,
With the Father's voice as from Abraham to Isaac.
And the glory of the Most High shall be uttered over him,
And the spirit of understanding and sanctification shall rest upon him.
For he shall give the majesty of the Lord to His sons in truth for evermore;

[1] Op. cit. p. xcviii.

And there shall none succeed him for all generations for ever.

And in his priesthood the Gentiles shall be multiplied in knowledge upon the earth,

And enlightened through the grace of the Lord :

In his priesthood shall sin come to an end,

And the lawless shall cease to do evil.

And he shall open the gates of Paradise,

And shall remove the threatening sword against Adam.

And he shall give to the saints to eat from the tree of life,

And the spirit of holiness shall be on them.

And Beliar shall be bound by him,

And he shall give power to his children to tread upon the evil spirits.

And the Lord shall rejoice in His children,

And be well-pleased in His beloved ones for ever.[1]

No Christian reader can fail to be deeply impressed with words like these, nor wonder that they have been regarded as a direct prophecy of our Lord. We need not shrink from seeing in them part of Israel's Witness to the world, the carrying forward under the divine guidance of the hopes of the past.

The writer of the Testaments, like so many of the great canonical prophets, had to taste all the bitterness of disillusionment and disappointed hopes. John Hyrcanus at the close of his reign deserted the party of the Chasidim, and joined the worldly and Hellenizing Sadducees. The indignation of the faithful is reflected in the part of the Book of Enoch known as the

[1] T. Levi xviii. 2–13.

Similitudes, chapters xxxvii.–lxx., written probably between 94–79 B.C. before the coming of the Romans. The kings and the mighty ones are now denounced as having outraged God's children and shed their blood, and are threatened with expulsion from the houses of God's congregations, and with terrible chastisements in hell.[1]

The historical connexion seems plain. Weary of his strife with the Pharisees, Alexander Jannaeus asked them to name their conditions of peace. Their sole answer was 'thy death,' and terrible scenes of bloodshed followed. From the present the writer of the Similitudes looked away to the future, and drew a picture which was unique in Jewish expectations. No longer looking for a human deliverer, he declared the advent of a Messiah who had been pre-existent from the beginning, and who sits on the throne of God. This Messiah is called the Son of Man. 'Before the suns and the signs were created, before the stars of the heaven were made, his name was named before the Lord of spirits.'[2] He is the Elect One standing before the Lord of spirits, and his glory is for ever and ever, and his might unto all generations.[3] Judgement is committed to him—

> And he sat upon the throne of his glory, and the sum of judgement was committed unto him, the Son of Man,

[1] Enoch lxii. 11–12; xlvii. 1–2; xlvi. 8.
[2] Enoch xlviii. 3.
[3] Enoch xlix. 2.

and he caused the sinners and those who have led the world astray to pass away and be destroyed from off the face of the earth.[1]

He is described in wonderful terms—

> And I saw One who had a head of days, and His head was white like wool, and with Him was another Being whose countenance had the appearance of a man and his face was full of graciousness, like one of the holy angels.[2]
>
> On that day Mine Elect One will sit on the throne of glory, and make choice amongst their deeds, and their mansions will be innumerable, and their souls will grow strong within them when they see Mine elect ones and those who have called upon My glorious name.[3]

Heaven and earth will be made new, and the Elect One will dwell among his people.[4] One perfect passage more must be quoted, whose beauty contrasts strangely with the fiercely anticipated punishment of the wicked—

> And in that place I saw a fountain of righteousness which was inexhaustible : around it were many fountains of wisdom, and all the thirsty drank of them and were filled with wisdom, and had their dwellings with the righteous and holy and elect.[5]

Dr. Charles points out that four titles applied for the first time in literature to the personal Messiah in the Similitudes are afterwards reproduced in the New Testament. These are 'Christ' or 'the Anointed One,'

[1] Enoch lxix. 27.
[2] Enoch xlvi. 1.
[3] Enoch xlv. 3.
[4] Enoch xlv. 4–5.
[5] Enoch xlviii. 1.

'the Righteous One,' 'the Elect One,' and 'the Son of Man.' The most significant fact is the use made of the title 'the Son of Man,' no longer as in Daniel a personification of the nation, but a definite personal name. The judgement committed to this Son of Man is of special importance when we think of the New Testament references to the Son of Man seated on his judgement throne. We cannot doubt that these passages were known to our Lord, and since He Himself used them we need not fear to see in them a living part of the Witness of Israel.

The last evidence we shall quote is that found in the *Psalms of Solomon*. These were certainly written after Pompey's invasion of Palestine, and spring from the party of the Pharisees. They represent more clearly than any other writing we possess the hopes regarding the Messiah which prevailed shortly before the birth of Jesus. The writer has finally broken with the thought that any member of the ruling family can bring back Israel's glory. He denounces the Maccabean princes as having 'laid waste the throne of David,'[1] and as having been rightly punished by 'a man that was a stranger to our race,' i.e. Pompey. To him the only hope is in the coming of the long-promised king of David's house. At first he prays for this Deliverer, but soon his prayer goes out into confident expectation, and he draws a full-length portrait of the

[1] Ps. Sol. xvii. 8. The translation is from the edition of Ryle and James.

King Messiah. He is coming to drive out the Gentiles from the borders of Israel, and to break the power of all unjust rulers. Into his peaceable and holy kingdom all the dispersed of Israel shall be gathered, and he will reign in Jerusalem. The subject Gentiles shall bring their tribute to him and accept the true religion. A few verses may be quoted in illustration—

A righteous king and taught of God is he that reigneth over them; and there shall be no iniquity in his days in their midst, for all shall be holy, and their king is the Lord Messiah.[1]

The blessing of the Lord is with him in might, and his hope in the Lord shall not faint. And who can stand up against him? He is mighty in his works and strong in the fear of God, tending the flock of the Lord with faith and righteousness; and he shall suffer none among them to faint in their pasture.[2]

It should be noted that the Messiah thus portrayed is not divine. There is no mention here, as in the Similitudes, of his pre-existence. He is endowed with the richest spiritual gifts, and his weapons are spiritual also; he conquers by the power of goodness. Thus as the century closed the hopes of the Pharisees went back to the earlier teaching of the prophets, and looked for the Davidic king. Till that king appeared they counselled patience, and bade their followers prepare for this advent by the minute observance of the law. Unhappily the more spiritual aspects of the hope soon

[1] Ps. Sol. xvii. 35–6. [2] Ps. Sol. xvii. 43–5.

receded, and the worship of the letter produced the hard and unlovely characters of those who opposed our Lord. Yet in Zechariah and Elisabeth, in Simeon and Anna, we find the representatives of the pious kernel of the nation which never ceased to exist. Simeon's enraptured words of gladness hail the child Jesus as 'a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.' It is on this note that the prophecies of the old Dispensation close. From the simple faith of this saintly man all that is national and exclusive has been purged away. He sees the dawn of the new day, and can now depart in peace, confident that soon the whole world will be flooded with light.

Here, then, our survey of the prophetic hopes of Israel must end. We have traced these hopes in many forms. Sometimes they have been strictly limited to the nation, and have sternly excluded all outsiders from any participation in them. Yet it can be most confidently claimed that in essence the religion of Israel is universal. We have seen Abraham rising above all his contemporaries to the faith in the one supreme God. We have marked how in the earliest narratives of Genesis the ancestor of the whole human race was made in the image of God, whilst the hope foreshadowed in Eden was the victory of all humanity over evil. The law that bound the tribes into a nation was first promulgated not in Palestine at all, but in Sinai. The Midrash on Exod. xix. 2 makes on this the striking comment—

If the law had been given in the land of Israel perhaps Israel would have said to the peoples of the world, 'You have no share in it.' Therefore it was given in the wilderness, an unappropriated law on unappropriated territory. He who will adopt it let him come and adopt it.

The ethical universalism of the Decalogue confirms this claim. The very fact that Israel called itself 'a chosen people' showed the faith in a God capable of moral choice, not bound by any racial or geographical conditions whatsoever. All that tended to separate Israel from the rest of mankind, most of all the ceremonial law, was the shell behind which the treasure meant to enrich the world was guarded. Behind the forms we see in the history of this people a mighty spiritual movement. Other nations played their part and passed away, but still amongst this people the hope of a glorious future lived on. Have these hopes passed away into nothing? Is modern Judaism, which no longer seeks to impose its special national rites and institutions upon foreigners, but yet claims to be the truest teacher of faith in the one God, the true fulfilment of all this wondrous past? Or does not rather the New Testament supply the true answer? To show that the Witness of Israel was a Witness of Jesus is the task that is attempted in the closing chapters of this book.



BOOK III

REALIZATION



INTRODUCTION

The new world of the New Testament—The relation to the Person of Jesus—Contrast with the Old Testament—Modern questions as to the relation between Jesus and Christ.

AS the Bible reader passes from the Old to the New Testament, he is conscious at once that he has entered a new world of thought and experience. Much that is strange to the Old Testament, in particular the developed doctrine of heaven and hell, finds its partial explanation in the teaching of the post-Maccabean age. But that in itself does not explain the sense of novelty. What is really new is the constant expression of faith in one Person, and the unwavering attribution to Him of all that is glad and vital in experience. Old Testament writers were always looking forward. Their hopes were shaped in many forms, so various that it is hardly possible to collect them under any single category. The hopes of the New Testament writers also are very variously expressed. But they are bound together by the fact that at the centre of them all is this same Person. The history of all the past culminated in Him in His earthly life, and in His exalted life He is the goal of

all the history of the future. So much at least will be conceded by writers of every school.

There are, however, two directions along which criticism is now moving. It is suggested in the first place that the New Testament writers have fatally misrepresented the real meaning and significance of the life of Jesus, and that between Jesus of Nazareth and the Christ of modern Christianity there is a great gulf. And secondly, whatever is made of this first question, it is claimed that Christianity is a failing force, inadequate to cope with the complex problems of our modern civilization.

In the pages that follow, three questions will therefore be very briefly discussed. (1) The place claimed by Jesus Himself in the world's history. (2) The apostolic interpretation of these claims. (3) The adequacy of these claims in face of our present needs.[1]

[1] Since this part of this book was sketched, Dr. Denney's notable work, *Jesus and the Gospel*, has appeared. Dr. Denney deals with the first two questions with far more scholarship and ability than the present writer possesses. Nevertheless, he has presented the argument from his own point of view, in the hope that it may be useful to some whom Dr. Denney's book may not reach.

CHAPTER I

OUR LORD'S WITNESS TO HIMSELF

Our Lord's attitude to the past—Harnack and Bousset on this—Examination of the oldest sources of the Gospels—Jesus claimed that a new era dawned with His coming—Hence the urgency of His message—Harnack on this—Jesus claimed that He fulfilled the history of Israel—Proofs of this—Relation of our Lord to the characteristic forms of the Messianic hope: (*a*) The Davidic King—The triumphal entry—Discussion of Psalm cx. (*b*) The Son of Man—Relation to Daniel and Enoch. (*c*) The Servant of Jehovah—John the Baptist's attitude to this—The three titles blend in our Lord's use of them and in His application of them—Jesus as the goal of prophecy—The Lord's Supper—His place in universal history.

IN attempting reverently to inquire into our Lord's consciousness of His own Person and work, we begin from His attitude to the history of Israel, and to the revelation of God contained in it. To Him that long and chequered past was illumined by the light of God. Prophets, psalmists, lawgivers, had all received true messages, and declared them to unbelieving generations. In their teaching He found spiritual support and weapons against temptation. To them He directed His opponents, and bade them find there the answers to their own objections. He saw the increasing

purpose of God running through the centuries, and marvelled at the stubbornness and blindness of those who could not discern it. And yet He claimed that this purpose culminated in Himself!

So much is granted by Harnack—

> What a moment it must have been for Him when He recognized that He was the one of whom the prophets had spoken; when He saw the whole history of His nation from Abraham to Moses downwards in the light of His own mission; when He could no longer avoid the conviction that He was the promised Messiah.[1]

In his work on 'Jesus,' in the *Volksbücher*, Bousset also finds himself compelled to believe that from the baptism onwards, this consciousness of Messiahship was present. Bousset, however, argues that this conception was a burden rather than a help to our Lord. It was so weighted with the false nationalistic expectations that He would willingly have disowned it if He could. Yet, on the other hand, since He had to proclaim the coming kingdom of God, and since, according to the popular conception, this was not thinkable without the Messiah, He was obliged to take this position. Bousset goes on to speak of our Lord's consciousness that He was unique, the fulfiller with none to come after Him, and then concludes: 'When Jesus wished to bring this consciousness to expression . . . the thought of the Messiah presented itself to Him as the only possibility in His environment.'[2]

[1] *What is Christianity?* E.T. p. 140.

[2] See the whole section on *Das Geheimnis der Person*, pp. 81–96.

The difficulty of such a position is in its entire inadequacy to account for the Jesus of whom Bousset speaks so reverently. Bousset says in words one is glad to quote—

> He valued the authority of the past, but placed Himself above it. He would be more than kings and prophets, than David, Solomon, and the Temple. He opposed Himself to the tradition of the Old Testament, 'But I say unto you,' and even Moses himself was not to Him an authority to whom He submitted unconditionally.[1]

But we must remember that Jesus set Himself above the past just because He claimed to fulfil it. The past was a unity to Him because it was full of the constant effort of God to reveal Himself to men. The Messianic hope was, as we have seen, the uniting bond that linked together all the scattered anticipations of many centuries. Must not Jesus have believed that that hope was God-inspired? We cannot see that there is more than one answer to that question. But if so, to suggest that Jesus would have gladly done His work without using this conception at all becomes impossible. If we are unable to see in the history of Israel the special revelation of God, and the continuous preparation for a final manifestation, then we must try to free the teaching and consciousness of Jesus from all national forms and limitations. Bousset seeks to do this. But, for all its eloquence and attractiveness, his presentation of Jesus seems to us to be unsatisfying

[1] Ibid. p. 97.

and unreal. In his reverence for the One whom he is not ashamed to call Master, he gives up much of what that Master Himself most deeply reverenced. We must either do more than this or less.

Let us proceed to draw out a little more fully the proof that our Lord claimed that the new era had dawned with His coming. We take a passage belonging to the matter common to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, coming from the source which the critics call Q, believed by Sir William Ramsay to have been written while Christ was still living, registering the impression made on eye-witnesses by the words and acts of Christ.[1] Even if this surprisingly early date fails to find acceptance, Harnack's investigations seem to prove that Mark was written in the fifties, and Q earlier still. The passage is found in Matthew xiii. 16–17; Luke x. 23–4. As Matthew gives it, it reads—

> But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear. For verily I say unto you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see the things which ye see and saw them not, and to hear the things which ye hear but heard them not.

The meaning is clear. Our Lord claims that in Himself the supreme manifestation towards which all the saints of old had looked with wistful eyes had at last been made. Precisely the same conclusion comes from the passage from the same primitive source about

[1] *Luke the Physician.*

John the Baptist, Matt. xi. 11, Luke vii. 28. Jesus recognized to the full the titanic greatness of His forerunner, and saw him towering above all other men, and yet He says, 'he that is but little in the kingdom of God is greater than he.' John lived in the old era; Jesus claimed that He had brought in a new one.

It is from this standpoint that we are to understand the urgency of the proclamation of our Lord's message. The authenticity of the sending forth of the twelve disciples with commission to heal and to teach is guaranteed by all the synoptists. They went forth charged with the thought that the acceptance or rejection of their proclamation was a matter of life or death to their hearers. Similarly when Jesus pronounced His woes on Bethsaida and Chorazin and Capernaum, He spoke in the solemn light of the judgement day. Others before them had listened to prophets and teachers, but none to any like Himself. Brought face to face with Him men must make the final and everlasting choice: from this there is no escape. Harnack deals with such passages by suggesting that every true prophet who has become conscious of God is filled with terror and agony as he recognizes that all mankind is sunk in error and indifference.

> The time is running out, it is the last moment—this is the cry in which, then, in all nations and at all times, any energetic call to conversion has been voiced whenever a fresh prophet has been granted them.[1]

[1] *What is Christianity?* p. 42.

But surely no other prophet ever claimed that his coming had brought the last age with it. Others have called men back to the forgotten virtues of the past, or cleared the choked-up fountains of energy and let the living waters flow. They have seen the truth with such startling clearness that they have been amazed and horrified at the blindness of their contemporaries. We see these men like beacon-lights along the dark path of history. But we see none who dared to judge his generation by its attitude to himself, who claimed that all history had been a preparation for his coming, who told men that their highest blessedness was in seeing and hearing him. If John was 'more than a prophet,' what did Jesus claim to be?

We pass on to a further consideration. Jesus declared that His coming brought in a new era. In what relation, then, did it stand to the past history of Israel? The answer must assuredly be given that He claimed to be the fulfilment of all the divinely inspired hopes which that history contained. A most instructive illustration of this is found in the passage from the primitive source given as a whole in Matt. xxiii. 31–9, and in two parts in Luke xi. 49–51, xiii. 31–5. In His moving lament over Jerusalem Jesus identifies Himself with that longsuffering love of God which so often in the sinful past would have gathered and sheltered the erring nation. He looks back over the long line of martyred messengers. He sees this line ending in Himself, and sees in the rejection of Himself

the culmination of Israel's guilt. The same thought rules in the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen, which is found in all the synoptists. There our Lord clearly distinguishes Himself from all former messengers in such a way that none of His hearers could possibly misunderstand Him. Many prophets and righteous men in the past had found nothing but wild grapes in the vineyard of Israel, and had received as their wages shame and outrage. But now God had sent at last one greater than them all, His own Son. The fate of the nation depends on its treatment of this Son. The last hour has struck, the final choice must be made. Should the nation reject this last appeal it must be shattered into dust. Again we note the absolute uniqueness of Christ's personal claim. With His coming a new page of history was opened, for which all the past had prepared.[1]

We pass now to consider our Lord's references to the various forms in which the hope of Israel had expressed itself. Three of these forms call for notice, the *Davidic king*, the *Son of Man*, and *the Servant of Jehovah.*

(*a*) With regard to the first the story of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem is most instructive.

[1] For an interesting defence of the authenticity of this parable, which has been denied by some, see an article by Prof. F. C. Burkitt in the *Transactions of the International Congress of the History of Religions* (1908), vol. ii. pp. 321 ff. Mr. Burkitt holds that the absence of any reference to the Resurrection, as well as the general congruence of thought with Christ's teaching, is a decisive proof that the parable was spoken by Him.

As our Lord rode into the city, rejoicing bands of pilgrims went before Him proclaiming 'Blessed is the kingdom that cometh, the kingdom of our father David.' The quotation that Matthew gives from Zechariah as to the coming of the king riding upon an ass must have been present in the minds of many who watched that scene, and doubtless in the mind of our Lord Himself. His acceptance of the homage clearly shows that He was deliberately fulfilling the prophecy. Yet as later He sat teaching He definitely rejected the popular interpretation of the hope for this Davidic king. Quoting the 110th Psalm, whose Messianic application was admitted by all, He asked how the Messiah could be at once the son and lord of David. The answer suggested by Him is that the terms in which the Messiah is described are far too impressive to be applied to any mere lineal descendant of David. The coming Deliverer has a far higher task than that of re-establishing a dynasty. Hence our Lord rejects altogether the common expectation, and claims to be King of a kingdom as far superior to any earthly kingdom as the Messiah of the Psalm was to any merely political king. On the earthly side He joins Himself to what was lowly and peaceable in the promised king, making no reference to the splendid list of passages that hailed the king as rich and glorious and mighty in battle. But on the Godward side His claims are so great that our thought dares not follow Him.

It should be observed that our Lord's own treatment of these hopes must be decisive for the Christian interpretation of them. Even as He stripped away all that was external and temporary, fulfilling them in their essence only, in the spirit and not in the letter, so must we. At the same time we must not forget that in using this Psalm of Himself He claimed the spiritual functions of the Priest-King, a thought grandly worked out in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

(*b*) We turn now to the second form of these hopes as reflected in our Lord's use of the title *Son of Man*.

It is altogether impossible, in these few pages, even to outline the discussions as to the meaning of this name. They are enough to fill a library. Harnack remarks: 'The very expression "Son of Man"—that Jesus used it is beyond question—seems to me to be intelligible only in a Messianic sense.'[1] Accepting this conclusion, we must proceed to ask whence such a designation came. We have already commented on the meaning of the phrase in Daniel, and in the Similitudes of Enoch. In Daniel it prefigures the human character of the coming kingdom of the saints as opposed to the brutal violence of the wicked and godless rulers of the world. In Enoch it appears as the title of a superhuman, pre-existent being, of whom it is said—

He sat himself upon the throne of his glory, and the sum of judgement was committed unto him, the Son of

[1] *What is Christianity?* p. 130.

Man, and he caused the sinners and them that have led the world astray to disappear from the face of the earth and to be destroyed.[1]

That in both these books the reference is to the Messianic kingdom is beyond question. If we ask what are the thoughts that are expressed in Daniel and in Enoch, we find that they are two—humanity and sovereignty. Both of these, indeed, are present in Daniel, but in Enoch the application is made to a distinct person. Is it too much to say that our Lord, rejecting the titles that had been degraded by mere worldly and political associations, chose for Himself one that emphasized His common humanity, His lowliness and gentleness, and yet was capable of expressing the immeasurable greatness of His claims? He was the Son of Man who came eating and drinking, sharing the simple needs and pleasures of daily life, one with the humble and the poor. Yet at the same time He was the Son of Man who would sit on the throne of His glory, who even now looks far away beyond this world, and sees the time when He and all others must appear before God, and all men's eternal destiny be determined by His acknowledgement or denial.

If we follow this clue we can interpret all the occurrences of 'the Son of Man' in the Gospels. In some the human side is emphasized, but the consciousness of royalty is never absent. When He says 'the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head,' the

[1] Enoch lxix. 27–8.

thought shines through that 'the pathos of His situation is not that of a poor man, but that of a disinherited King.'[1] We need not suppose that from the first His enemies understood that by this designation He was making Messianic claims. We may grant that until Peter's great confession He had never made such claims openly. But we have no doubt that, in His own consciousness, the full meaning was implicit from the very opening of His ministry. Again we are led into regions where thought dares not follow. Harnack, indeed, in glowing words, attempts to show that our Lord's consciousness of the great antithesis between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world produced His vision of the future.

> With dramatic intensity battle and victory stand like a picture before His soul, drawn in those large firm lines in which the prophets had seen them. At the close of the drama He sees Himself seated at the right hand of the Father, and His twelve disciples on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel; so objective was this picture to Him, so completely in harmony with the ideas of His time.[2]

But this does not explain the calm deliberation with which He chose the title 'Son of Man,' nor the transcendent fullness of meaning which He put into it. As Dr. Denney has said—

> Nothing marks off His consciousness of Himself more distinctly from every form of prophetic consciousness than

[1] Denney, *Jesus and the Gospel*, p. 293.
[2] *What is Christianity?* p. 53.

this, that whereas the prophets looked forward to the coming of another, what Jesus saw as the final and glorious consummation of God's purposes was His own coming again.[1]

If that is true, and surely it is, what was most characteristic of our Lord's scheme of the future was not what was common to Him and His contemporaries, but what was unique in His case, the central significance given to His own person. Thus we come again to the conclusion. The Witness of Israel was to the coming of a Person. Jesus claimed to be that Person, and by His use of 'Son of Man' indefinitely deepened the meaning of all earlier hopes.[2]

(*c*) In the third place, we come to the sayings in which our Lord takes to Himself the place of the suffering *Servant of Jehovah*, blending that conception many times with the title 'Son of Man.'

In studying these sayings it is well to begin by considering the work of John the Baptist, and the testimony that he bore. All the synoptists introduce their account of John by quoting from Isa. xl. the great words about the herald voice in the wilderness proclaiming the coming of the Lord. In the fourth Gospel the same

[1] Op. cit. p. 297.

[2] Bousset does not deny that Jesus used this title, though he limits the number of instances. As he will not admit that Jesus thought of Himself as the Judge he has to give up the passages which suggest this. He has to support two contradictory propositions: (1) That Jesus only used the title in moments of great exaltation; (2) that He used it without any apprehension of the highest claims it involved. See *Jesus*, pp. 94–5.

words are said to have been quoted by John himself, in answer to the deputation from the priests and Levites.[1] When we examine the reported sayings of John, it is notable how many echoes there are from the closing part of the Book of Isaiah. The figure of the threshing-floor and the fan is in chapter xl. verses 15–16; the appeal to Abraham as father is in chapter li. verse 2; the promise of the bridegroom is in chapter lxii.; the warnings against exaction and violence can be paralleled from chapter lviii.; the anointing with the Spirit is in both chapters xlii. and lxi. Hence we may say that whilst John shared in the expectation of his day that the Messianic age would be one of judgement, it was largely from these chapters of Isaiah that he filled in the outlines. But if so, we are compelled to ask what impression the passages about the suffering Servant made upon him. Did he never ponder them and ask their meaning also? We believe that the words attributed to him in the fourth Gospel, 'Behold the Lamb of God that beareth away the sin of the world,' supply the answer. As he looked on Jesus, the deep words of Isa. liii. suddenly sprang into new meaning for him, and he saw before him the one on whom the Lord was to lay the iniquities of us all.

It is well known that it is strongly denied that John could have uttered these words at all. Schmiedel, for instance, affirms that they make John's later question as to whether Jesus was the Messiah impossible,

[1] John i. 23.

and many other scholars agree with him.[1] We maintain, on the contrary, that they really give the clue to the origin in John's own mind of his challenge, 'Art Thou He who should come, or look we for another?' When John asked that question his career had been cut short by his unrighteous arrest. The reward of his fearless denunciations of wrong had been imprisonment. As he lay in prison news was brought to him of the popularity of Jesus, then at its height. Could this Teacher, high in the favour of the crowds that followed Him, exercising a peaceful and successful ministry, really be that Servant who was to be despised and rejected of men? One may readily suppose that at such a time as this John would be likely to dwell on these aspects of the Servant's work more than on the promises of triumph and of glory. If this be so, we can understand the perfect appropriateness of the reply of Jesus. He turns John's thought to another passage in the same chapters so familiar to them both, and bids him note that in the work of healing and of teaching He is fulfilling one part of the Servant's mission.

In the light of this examination Schmiedel's further remark that in the fourth Gospel the Baptist is

> nothing more than a subsidiary figure introduced to make known the majesty of Jesus—a figure endowed with supernatural knowledge indeed, but always monotonously the same and historically quite colourless,[2]

[1] E. Bi. 2519. [2] Ibid.

misses the mark altogether. As in so many other instances, the fourth Gospel here sheds a welcome and unexpected light on what would be dark without it, and gives us a wonderful glimpse of the Baptist's inner consciousness.

This discussion has been introduced to show that from the opening of His ministry our Lord connected His work with that of the Servant of Jehovah. At first He laid stress on the consoling and healing aspects of this work. But presently He began to direct the attention of His disciples to the inevitable suffering and death that lay before Him. It is most notable how in these sayings He unites the title, 'Son of Man,' with this tragic expectation. It is the Son of Man who is to be delivered into the hand of sinners, and to give His life a ransom for many. When at the last the words of Isa. liii., 'And He was numbered with the transgressors,' are in His mind, or His thoughts turn to the smiting of the shepherd in Zech. xiii., it is still the Son of Man who 'goeth forth, even as it is written of Him.'[1] As in the great scene of judgement in Matt. xxv. 31-46, the Son of Man, who comes in His glory, is spoken of a few lines later as the King, so that the thought of the King and the Son of Man blend, so the Son of Man and the Servant of Jehovah unite in the one Person. This is of great significance. Jesus takes each of the great forms under which the hopes for the future had been expressed, forms so

[1] Matt. xxvi. 24.

various that, apart from Him, no harmony can be deduced from them, and with perfect naturalness applies them all to Himself. In so doing, He gave His seal to the claim that all the history of the past had worked towards one end. In that broad and comprehensive sense He claimed to be the goal of prophecy.

We have as yet said nothing of the infinite significance of the Last Supper.[1] In that solemn hour all the thoughts that have been described seem to find their focus. The old covenant between God and His people, sealed by blood, is to be replaced by another, of which His own blood is the abiding seal. He gives Himself to be the food of the souls of His followers. He looks forward to the day when they with Him will rejoice together in the immediate presence of God. As He shows us here His place in universal history, His links with the past, with all its imperfect yearnings and desires, His sufficiency for all the future, till time shall be no more, our questionings are silenced, our doubts subdued, as we bow before Him and exclaim, 'My Lord, and my God!'

We have looked at the past, with its rainbows of hope spanning the stormy sky, and with wistful eyes have waited while we questioned—

> Whose foot shall I see emerge,
> Whose from the straining topmost dark,
> On to the keystone of that arc?

[1] On this, vide infra, pp. 289–90.

And we have had the answer—

> He was there,
> He Himself with His human air.

'We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth.'

CHAPTER II

THE APOSTOLIC WITNESS

The first Christian preachers of the Old Testament: (1) The early speeches of Peter—Schmiedel's view of these—Their Christology—1 Peter. (2) The teaching of St. Paul—His knowledge of the life of Jesus—The authority to him of the words of Jesus—His view of the history of Israel identical with that of Jesus—No gap for him between past and future—St. Paul and the Messianic hopes—The Davidic King—The Son of Man—This term absent, but ideas, both human and eschatological, present—The Servant of Jehovah—Paul's claim to be the true expositor of Jesus—His teaching on the Lord's Supper. (3) The Epistle to the Hebrews—Its present value—View of the history of Israel—Treatment of the Messianic hopes—Blending of the human and divine in Jesus—Attitude to the law. (4) The Johannine writings—The Gospel and Epistles—Attitude to the Old Testament—Firm grasp of history—Schmiedel on the humanity of Jesus in this Gospel—Answers from Epistle and Gospel—Place of the three Messianic conceptions—Meaning of judgement in Johannine writings and the rest of the New Testament—The Apocalypse—Jesus fulfils all the prophecies—Yet is worshipped with God—Influence of Jesus on His contemporaries, men of ardently monotheistic faith.

IN his exquisite story of the walk to Emmaus, Luke declares that on the way the risen Lord expounded from Moses, and from all the prophets, the things concerning Himself.[1] To the believer in

[1] Luke xxiv. 27.

the Resurrection this inimitable narrative seems to bear the marks of self-evidencing truth. But, even if this be doubted, the words aptly describe the use made by the first Christian preachers of the Old Testament. To them it was certain that the central fact of all these ancient Scriptures was the presence of a great hope and of a great promise, and that both had been realized in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus. The present chapter presents very briefly some part of the proof of such an assertion.

1. We begin with Luke's account of the early speeches of *Peter*, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. This is of great evidential value. Schmiedel may be taken again as the exponent of extreme negative criticism. Yet he accepts the Christology of these speeches of Peter as historically important in the highest degree. He goes on to argue that in them Jesus is presented as a man, servant of God, but not son, not constituted Lord and Messiah before His resurrection, and so on.[1] He claims that this is in exact agreement with the impression left by the most genuine passages of the first three Gospels, and that no such representation is to be found elsewhere in the whole New Testament. Hence he concludes that it must have come from a primitive source.

But quite apart from the discussion of the last chapter, which attempted to show the impossibility of resting in a purely humanitarian conception of Jesus,

[1] E. Bi. col. 48.

this view slurs over all that is most significant in the speeches in question. Peter aims at proving that all the Old Testament is full of anticipation of the coming of Jesus. Jesus—the very same Jesus who was crucified—was the long-expected King of David's line (ii. 29, &c.); He was the Servant delivered up and denied, but raised again (iii. 13–15); His suffering and death were foreshown by the prophets (iii. 18, &c.); He is the appointed Judge of quick and dead (x. 42). Thus the three great conceptions which we have studied in the words of Jesus Himself, King, Servant, Judge, all reappear here. Moreover, the thought of the new era is most strikingly expressed both in the quotation from Joel (ii. 17–21) and in the statement that 'all the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after, as many as have spoken, they also told of these days' (iii. 24). Hence the same note of urgency and of solemn warning to those who reject this message (iii. 23). When one takes a step back and contemplates these statements as a whole their effect is overwhelming. Who is this Person who stands in the centre of the world's history, whose coming separates past from present? Under what category can He be classed? Peter begins, it is true, with a statement of the well-known facts of the life of Jesus. But the comment of Erasmus is surely the true one: 'He praises Christ nobly before the rough multitude, yet only calls Him a man, that gradually from the facts they may recognize His divinity.' Before his first speech is over Peter has attributed to

Jesus the gift of the Holy Spirit, and quoted in illustration of this words used by Joel of Jehovah Himself; and has proclaimed baptism in His name for the remission of sins. It is to be particularly observed that there is for Peter no gap between the historic Jesus and the glorified Christ. To him history from Abraham onwards is a unity, through which the purpose of God was being worked out. For the perfection of this purpose the earthly life was as essential as the risen glory. To deny this seems to make his appeal to the past altogether meaningless.

When Schmiedel says again that in Peter's speeches the death of Jesus 'was not a divine arrangement for the salvation of men, but a calamity the guilt of which rested on the Jews, even if it was foreordained of God,'[1] he suggests, certainly incorrectly, that the two thoughts are incompatible. There is no need to argue that the crucifixion was not a crime, because there God was reconciling the world unto Himself. The Christian consciousness still owns the contrary to be true as it sings—

> The blood that was shed, for me let it plead
> And declare Thou hast died in Thy murderer's stead.

Moreover, the great thoughts of Isa. liii., which the references to the Servant assure us were in Peter's mind, connect indissolubly the suffering with the sin-bearing, and then with the redemption. Hence the

[1] E. Bi. col. 48.

Christology of Peter's speeches appears to be surprisingly full and complete. That he could have expressed it within a few weeks of the death of Jesus would be an insoluble mystery if it had not been in essential harmony with the claims of his Master. His maturer thoughts as set forth in his first epistle are only the development of what was present from the first. With reference to the relation of his teaching in the epistle to the Old Testament we may quote the weighty words of Dr. Hort—

Their (the apostles') faith was not a new religion, but a new stage in the old religion of Israel, and it derived a large part of its claims to acceptance from this its appeal to the past in conjunction with the present. The dream of a Christianity without Judaism soon arose, and could not but arise: but, though it could make appeal to a genuine zeal for the purity of the gospel, it was, in fact, an abnegation of apostolic Christianity. When robbed of His Messiahship, our Lord became an isolated portent, and the true meaning of faith in Him was lost. This was one of the most fundamental subjects of controversy in the second century, and with good reason the watchword of the champions of the apostolic teaching was the harmony of prophets with apostles.[1]

2. As we turn to consider the relation of *St. Paul* to Christ we enter a region where many battles have been fought, and where the conflict is still fiercely raging. In spite of a few dissentient voices it may be asserted that the authenticity of at least the central

[1] Hort, *Commentary on 1 Peter*, p. 57.

group of Paul's epistles has been conclusively vindicated. In the same series of *Volksbücher* in which Bousset writes, Dr. Vischer admits six epistles as genuine, 1 Thessalonians, Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Romans, and Philippians. There is much in modern criticism to show that these concessions will have to go very much further.[1]

It must, however, be recognized that the winning of this victory by the defenders of orthodox Christianity, despite its great importance, has only proved a preliminary to the ultimate conflict. The question in dispute is now sharply defined as 'Was Jesus or Paul the founder of Christianity?'[2]

The answers to this question may be considered under two heads: (1) What did Paul know about Jesus? (2) How far did he advance upon His teaching? As to the first of these, it becomes plainer every year that Paul was familiar with many of the words of Jesus. The statement of a recent article in the *Hibbert Journal* that, apart from the reference to the Lord's Supper, Paul makes no appeal to the teaching of Jesus, is amazing from a writer who professes to set forth the results of modern criticism.[3] In the work of Dr. Knowling just referred to the views of many scholars of all shades of critical opinion are given.

[1] See e.g. Dr. Knowling's survey of the question in his *The Testimony of St. Paul to Christ.*

[2] Cf. an article with this title by Prof. McGiffert in the *American Journal of Theology*, January, 1909.

[3] Article, 'Jesus or Christ,' January, 1909.

Referring to a writer of a very advanced position Dr. Knowling says—

If we turn to our Lord's teaching, we find that, according to Holtzmann, St. Paul must have had considerable acquaintance with it. He can refer e.g. to our Lord's teaching as to marriage, to His ordinance for the maintenance of the Church, to His appeal to love as the fulfilling of the law; he knows of our Lord's great discourses as to His coming to judgement, and he borrows some of his phraseology from it; he speaks e.g. in his earliest epistle of that coming as of the coming of a thief in the night. We are reminded, too, of the way in which the language so frequent in the epistles as to the building up, the edifying of the Christian community, as to the authority which the Lord gave for building up, and not for casting down, may have passed to St. Paul from our Lord's use of the same metaphor when He spoke of building His Church.[1]

From this list of references we select one, the teaching as to marriage. In 1 Cor. Paul is replying to a series of questions as to points of morality arising from the complex social conditions of the great city of Corinth. Presently he comes to a question on which Jesus Himself had pronounced. At once his tone changes. 'Not I,' he says, 'but the Lord'[2] has given commandment in this case. The inference is obvious. Paul takes it for granted that the Corinthians were acquainted with the words of Christ, and that these words have an absolute authority against which there is no appeal. It is neither for him nor them to argue about that. Such an instance only confirms

[1] Op. cit. p. 203. [2] 1 Cor. vii. 10.

one's expectations. It was surely impossible for so alert a mind as Paul's to have remained ignorant about the life and words of Jesus. Some teaching about these must have been the first lessons that Christian catechumens would receive. But this passing reference in 1 Cor., arising quite incidentally, proves very strikingly the truth of such suppositions.[1]

Concluding, then, that Paul knew and reverenced as of supreme authority the words of Jesus, we have yet to ask whether his teaching as to the work and Person of his Master does really go far beyond the limits of Christ Himself. It is obvious that all that can be done here is to give a few indications as to the way in which such a question must be answered.

We begin by remarking that Paul's attitude to the meaning of the history of Israel is essentially one with that of Christ. The speech at Pisidian Antioch[2] has been denied to him by many critics. Yet, as Sir W. M. Ramsay has pointed out, the coincidences of thought in that speech and the Epistle to the Galatians 'are so striking as to make each the best commentary on the other.'[3] Here we find the same confident assurance that in Jesus the promise made to the fathers had been fulfilled, while the note on which the address closes—the conviction that justification is not to be found in the law of Moses—is essentially true to Paul's own

[1] For Paul's reference to the Lord's Supper, vide infra, p. 289.

[2] Acts xiii. 16–40.

[3] Cf. also Knowling, in loco, Exp. Greek Test.

experience. But quite apart from this there is the unquestionable evidence of the great epistles. The gospel Paul preached had, he said, been 'promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures';[1] the righteousness he proclaimed was 'witnessed by the law and the prophets';[2] the death and resurrection of Jesus were both 'according to the Scriptures.'[3]

It is impossible to cut Paul's teaching away from its roots in the past history of his nation. We see this still more clearly in the two great passages which expound his philosophy of history. In the Galatian epistle Paul shows that there were three stages in the history of revelation: (1) the promise, (2) the law, (3) the fulfilment of the promise in Jesus. The third stage began, it must be observed, with the *birth* of Jesus. 'When the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman.'[4] In the grand argument of Rom. ix.–xi., Paul shows the indispensable place of Israel in God's redeeming purpose. There, again, all that glorious past on which he dwells so lovingly—'the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the temple service, and the promises'—culminated in the human birth of Jesus, the crown of that people 'of whom, as concerning the flesh, is the Christ.'[5] We cannot here pursue the apostle's teaching as to the future destiny

[1] Rom. i. 2.
[2] Rom. iii. 21.
[3] 1 Cor. xv. 3-4.
[4] Gal. iv. 4.
[5] Rom. ix. 4-5.

of the human race, but it has been truly said that 'the human mind has conceived nothing more splendid and yet sober, more humbling and exalting, than the view of man's history and destiny thus sketched out.'[1]

But what we are here concerned to argue is this: To Paul history is a closely knit whole. The earthly life of Jesus cannot be torn away from or left out of his scheme without destroying its harmony. The man who could make these magnificent generalizations, and sweep both past, present, and future with his glance, was not so inept as to ignore this fact. He is rather absolutely at one with his Master in his assurance that with the earthly life of Jesus the new era came. To the unbelieving world the Resurrection was God's unanswerable proof that the One whom it had rejected and cast out was His chosen Son. But this was only the declaration of a pre-existent fact which the world had been too blind to see.

Let us now proceed to consider the attitude of Paul towards the three forms of the Messianic expectation already studied in the words of our Lord and of Peter. We note at once that he is fully aware of the claims of Jesus to Davidic descent. He is 'of the seed of David according to the flesh,' and is identified with 'the root of Jesse.'[2] Paul also quotes the famous 110th Psalm, and applies it to Christ: 'He must reign, till He hath

[1] Findlay, *Galatians*, p. 198.
[2] Rom. i. 3; xv. 12 (cf. 2 Tim. ii. 8).

put all His enemies under His feet.'[1] But he lays no more stress upon the literal meaning than did Jesus Himself, passing away at once to show the higher spiritual Sonship, in this exactly following his Master.

The second title, '*Son of Man,*' is, as is well known, nowhere found in Paul's writings. That may well be because such a title would not be understood by Greeks, to whom it had none of the associations of heavenly glory which it possessed for Jews, and might appear to them to unduly emphasize the humanity. But the ideas which the name connotes are present everywhere. On the human side, Paul speaks of 'the meekness and gentleness of Christ';[2] reminds his readers that in bearing affliction they become 'imitators of the Lord';[3] and prays that their hearts may be directed 'into the patience of Christ.'[4] Yet he declares the coming of Jesus with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God.[5] This combination of the One who 'pleased not Himself'[6] with the One before whose judgement seat we must all be made manifest,[7] leads us back to the unique Person of the Gospels. The witness of St. Paul agrees with His witness of Himself.

But we may go further. In Dr. H. A. A. Kennedy's careful study of *St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things,* the author comments on Paul's use of the

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 25.
[2] 2 Cor. x. 1.
[3] 1 Thess. i. 6.
[4] 2 Thess. iii. 5.
[5] 1 Thess. iv. 16.
[6] Rom. xv. 3.
[7] 2 Cor. v. 10.

phrases, 'the day of our Lord Jesus Christ,' 'the day of Christ Jesus,' 'the day of Christ.' He continues—

These designations at once reveal the intimate connexion of the apostle's idea of judgement with the prophetic conception of the 'Day of the Lord.' Only, on the one hand, the horizon has immensely widened. On the other, the somewhat vague pictures of God's judgement which the prophets clothe in various forms, have given place to the definite intervention of the exalted Lord, Jesus Christ, armed with complete authority. Here it is plain that St. Paul has taken his stand on the teaching of Jesus Himself. For there can be no doubt whatever that one of the lofty claims which our Lord put forward with emphasis and frequency, was His position as judge of the final destinies of mankind. It will suffice to refer to such familiar passages as Matt. vii. 22–3 ; xiii. 41 f. ; xxv. 31 f. This was the point, we may say, at which the foundations of a distinctly Christian eschatology were laid. There was nothing to correspond to it in Judaism. There could not be, for the Jews had never conceived of a Messiah who should pass through a career of earthly activity, a career checked by death, and then return as the medium of God's final purpose for the universe.[1]

It is well to pause to consider the significance of these words. Jesus took the old Messianic conceptions and filled them with a meaning never found elsewhere. It seems impossible for any criticism ever to disprove that assertion. Yet in Paul we find the very same interpretation of these ancient hopes. Whence does this similarity come? Paul affirms that His teaching

[1] Op. cit. pp. 193–4.

sprang from Jesus, before whom he always bows in lowliest homage. We believe unprejudiced examination will show more and more that no other explanation is possible.

Leaving untouched, for want of space, a multitude of passages in which the same identity of thought appears, in particular those in which Christ is set forth as the second Adam, a few words will suffice on the last of the three Messianic conceptions, the suffering *Servant*. Paul's words, 'who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification,'[1] lead us right back to Isa. liii. But his whole doctrine of the connexion between the suffering and the shame and the cross and the redemption that was thus obtained, is evidence which no one denies, and need not be drawn out at length.

Summing up this discussion, we may say that Paul's teaching rests on an intimate knowledge of the words of Jesus, whose authority he holds as unchallengeably supreme; that his view of the meaning of the Old Testament, and of the history of Israel, is one with that of Jesus; and that our Lord's own thoughts as to the significance of Himself and of the part He was to play in the world's future are to be found in Paul. But if so, the suggestion that Paul thrust in between man and God some conception of the means of salvation, of which Jesus never dreamed, becomes unthinkable. Whatever may be said of the development

[1] Rom. iv. 25.

of Paul's thought on certain subjects, the thought that 'He gave Himself for our sins,' the knowledge that his life was being lived 'in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God who loved me, and gave Himself up for me,' was from the first the very heart of his experience. This, he claims insistently, was in harmony with the teaching of Peter and the rest of the apostles.[1] And we must add that if Jesus was what we have seen He claimed to be, some such interpretation of His work is inevitable. That Paul's interpretation was one with that of Jesus is, to our mind, proved finally by his reference to the Lord's Supper. Critical scepticism seems to reach its climax when it avers that this Sacrament as we know it comes from Paul and not from Jesus, that, as has been recently said, 'The Lord's Supper existed as a common meal before he became a Christian, but he gave it a new character.'[2] But the examination of 1 Cor. xi. leads to a very different conclusion. It would appear that the Corinthians had been boasting in their letter to Paul that they were holding fast what he had delivered to them.[3] He replies that far from doing this, they had turned the sacred Supper into a disorderly feast. Then solemnly and earnestly declaring that the words come from the Lord Himself, he repeats what, as they well know, he has already delivered to them, the story of the first

[1] Gal. i. ii.
[2] McGiffert, ut supra, p. 11.
[3] v. Dr. Findlay's notes on this chapter.

simple institution. It seems impossible that we have here the introduction of something new. No hint in the second epistle suggests that on this matter, at any rate, Paul's authority was ever questioned. The unvarying usage of the Christian Church in later days shows that it never was. We have every reason to trust the deliberate statement of Paul that what he says is direct, historical truth. If so, Jesus in the presence of death declared that His blood, so soon to be shed, would seal the new covenant that was to take the place of all the older covenants between man and God. And that forgiveness promised long since through Jeremiah, who saw so clearly the need of this before any other covenant could avail, was to come through that precious bloodshedding. All that Paul teaches comes from this. All the wealth of praise that he brings as his tribute to his Lord springs from the consciousness that this forgiveness is a great reality. All that he says of Jesus in his later epistles finds its justification here. He knows that from One who has done this for him 'neither death, nor life, nor height, nor depth' can ever separate him.

3. The next presentation of the work and significance of Jesus to be considered is that which meets us in the *Epistle to the Hebrews.* This epistle is, from many points of view, of priceless value. As Westcott reminds us, it was written at a time when it seemed that there was nothing for the Christian but either to cling to the letter of the Jewish Bible, or to reject it

altogether.[1] In the present day, when anxious minds fear that the same alternative lies before them, it is strengthening to remember with what magnificent success the author of the epistle vindicated the essential value of the Old Testament. Such a thought encourages us to face without fear the results of all modern critical research. If these show us that God's ways of manifestation were even more manifold than our fathers dreamed, we need not be dismayed. But our present purpose is to show as before that there is an essential harmony between this writer and Jesus Himself as to the meaning of the past and the hope of the future.

As to the meaning of Israel's history there is no doubt in the writer's mind. All along its course he heard the voices of the speakers for God, and at the end he heard God Himself speaking through His Son. With Jesus the new age dawned.[2] 'The new revelation is a continuation of the old so far as God is the author of both. It is wholly new and separate in character so far as Christ is the Mediator of it.'[3] There is no need to do more than indicate in passing how exactly this corresponds to the teaching of Jesus of the blessedness of those who saw what kings and prophets looked for in vain. All the heroes of faith looked forward to that 'better thing'[4] which every true Christian possesses.

It is because of this that we find the same note of urgency, the sense of the final and irrevocable choice

[1] *Commentary on Hebrews*, p. 492.
[2] Heb. i. passim.
[3] Westcott, op. cit. p. 7.
[4] Heb. xi. 40.

that man must make when brought face to face with Jesus. If that appeal is rejected, there is neither hope nor light.

Following out of this we note the many forms under which Jesus is set forth as the Messiah. He is the Divine Son (i. 5); the Davidic King, in whom the ancient promise given through Nathan was fulfilled (i. 5–8); the King-Priest (i. 13; x. 12); the Son of Man, 'as true man fulfilling the destiny of man, and the destiny of fallen man through suffering' (ii. 6–11); the representative prophet (ii. 13). Each one of these thoughts is, as we have seen, present in the teaching of Jesus. If He is not set forth here as Judge, the expectation of His return is never far away (ix. 28; x. 24–5). It did not fall within the scope of the epistle to speak of the effect of Christ's return upon the unbelieving.

When we put all these conceptions together, it is marvellous how they all blend in the One Person. The writer is familiar with the earthly life of Jesus, and delights to think of it. He refers to the temptation (ii. 18; iv. 15); the preaching of the gospel (ii. 3); the opposition of sinners (xii. 2); the gentleness of His bearing (v. 2); the agony in the garden (v. 7). Doubtless these are only incidental proofs of a far more detailed knowledge. And yet he sets the Man who endured all this tragic humiliation at God's right hand, and hails Him as Creator, Preserver, and Heir of all things (i. 2–3). Again, we note the closely knit unity

between the earthly life and the heavenly glory. One marked the road to the other. But there is no gap between Jesus and Christ any more than in Paul.

In one important respect the epistle goes beyond the teaching of Paul. To Paul the primary aspect of the law was that of a burdensome discipline, necessary to convict man of his sin and moral helplessness, and so prepare him for the freedom of the gospel. This thought is not absent from the epistle, but the writer dwells more often on the immediate value of the law as providing, though imperfectly, for man's approach to God, and so foreshadowing the complete access obtained through Christ. This completes the proof of the permanent value of the Old Testament. And we may apply both to Paul and to this writer the words of Westcott—

> In regard to God, the whole history of the Bible is a revelation of the progress of the unchanging method of salvation through which creation is carried to its issue. In regard to man, it is a revelation of the necessity and the power of faith, by which he attains to a realization of the eternal and the unseen, through suffering and failure, in fellowship with the Christ.[1]

4. In passing to the writings that bear the name of *John*, it is happily no part of our present task to enter into the critical questions about these books. It is, however, probably right to say that the traditional view of the authorship of the Gospel and the Epistles,

[1] *Hebrews*, p. 481.

or at any rate a view connecting them directly with the apostle John, can be more strongly defended to-day than ever before. Even as regards the Apocalypse, one of the most thoughtful of recent commentators says: 'It seems most in accordance with all the facts to hold that the Apocalypse, as we have it, and the Fourth Gospel, come directly or indirectly from the same source.'[1] But for our present purpose we need not press this. All that we desire to do is to show that these writings give to Jesus the same place in relation to both past and future as does the rest of the New Testament.

Commencing with the Gospel and Epistles, which seem indubitably to come from the same hand, we note the attitude to the past history. The ministry of the Baptist is heralded with the same words as to the voice crying in the wilderness. The Scriptures bear witness to Jesus.[2] A true understanding of the teaching of Moses would lead to faith in Him.[3] The unbelief which had thwarted the work of the prophets finds its final and complete manifestation in the rejection of Jesus.[4] Jesus is the Son of Man and Son of God, the long-looked-for Messiah who, in the consciousness of His own mission, declares that 'salvation is from the Jews,' and yet proclaims that because He has come all national distinctions are at an end, and that the true

[1] C. Anderson Scott, *Revelation*, Century Bible, p. 47.

[2] John v. 39.

[3] John v. 45–7.

[4] John xii. 38–41.

worshippers may now worship the Father in spirit and in truth.[1] This firm grasp of the historical position of Jesus is especially notable in one whose eye looks far back beyond the birth of time and sees 'in the beginning' the eternal Word with God Himself, and knows that 'the Word was God.'

It is, however, often stated that the true humanity of Jesus is so obscured in these writings as to be almost lost, and that an altogether supernatural and unearthly Person is represented. Thus Schmiedel writes—

> His baptism is not related because it seemed to interfere with His dignity; so also His temptation in the wilderness, His prayer in Gethsemane, and His forsaken cry on the cross are passed over in silence.[2]

But whatever may be the real explanation of the omissions of this Gospel, one is convinced that it is very different from this. It seems quite plain that the baptism is directly referred to in the first epistle, in the words about Him who came through the water and through the blood.[3] There the writer is arguing with heretics, who recognized that Jesus 'came by water'—receiving the Messianic anointing at the baptism—but who denied that the divine Christ could have suffered on the cross, and so taught that this Christ had left the human body before its death of shame. But John will have none of this. To him, both the beginning and

[1] John iv. 21-6. [2] E. Bi. col. 2529.
[3] 1 John v. 6.

the end of his Master's ministry were marked by manifestations of His Messiahship.

Under the sign of 'the water' he gathers up all the testimony to Jesus Christ, from man and from God, that attended His baptism; under the sign of 'the blood,' all that centres in the cross. When he speaks of the Lord as 'coming through (*traversing*) water and blood,' these are viewed historically as steps in His march of humiliation, suffering, and victory, as signal epochs in the continuous disclosure of Himself to men and crises in His past relations to the world; when he says '*in* the water and *in* the blood,' they are apprehended as abiding facts, each making its distinct and living appeal to our faith and together serving to mark out the ground upon which Christianity stands.[1]

The examination of this one instance shows the insecurity of Schmiedel's reasoning. Moreover, if John omitted what seemed to him unworthy of the glorified Christ, one has to ask why he did not insert the story of the Transfiguration, which so enhances the glory.

Schmiedel continues to argue that there are hardly any human traits in the Gospel.[2] It is surprising, however, to note how many of the suggestions as to the real humanity of Jesus that rise at once to the mind of an uncritical reader do come from this Gospel. One thinks of the tired and thirsty man by Jacob's well;[3] of the poignant pathos of the question, 'Would

[1] Dr. G. G. Findlay, *Fellowship in the Life Eternal*, p. 383.
[2] Ibid. 2530.
[3] John iv. 6–7.

ye also go away?'[1] of the homely Jesus who loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus; of the tears by the graveside of His friend;[2] of the washing of the feet of the disciples;[3] of the disciple whom He loved who reclined on His bosom;[4] of the care shown for His heartbroken mother as He hung on the cross;[5] of the cry, 'I thirst';[5] of the gentleness shown to the unbelieving Thomas;[6] of the fire and the food prepared for the disappointed fishermen.[7] We believe that these are all recollections of an eye-witness. But how much our human portrait of Jesus would lose were all these taken away from it![8]

Apart, however, from all these details, the purpose of the author is to show how Jesus came in the flesh. 'That which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled.'[9] That looking back at the end of a long life he saw glory which his eyes had been too dim to perceive while he walked and talked with his Master in daily intercourse is undeniable. But John surely knew enough to understand that he would be destroying his

[1] John vi. 67.
[2] John xi. 5, 35.
[3] John xiii. 5 ff.
[4] John xiii. 23.
[5] John xix. 26–8.
[6] John xx. 27.
[7] John xxi. 9 ff.

[8] Schmiedel's suggestion that Jesus wept at the graveside not because He was sorry but because He was angry at being disbelieved has not much to commend it (E. Bi. col. 2530). But even if this is right, such anger seems very human indeed. Certainly it would not be a mark of some exalted Being who was above the reach of ordinary emotion.

[9] 1 John i. 1.

own case by making the humanity of Jesus into an unreal abstraction. He had to do with men who wished to get rid as far as might be of the human Jesus, so as to exhibit the eternal Christ. Criticism to-day starts from the other end, and seeks rather to escape from the eternal Christ, so as to bring us face to face with the human Jesus. But John repudiates decisively both these methods and the words which unite the human and the divine—'These are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God'[1]—express with the utmost plainness what his own answer is to such attempts.

We have now to follow the place given in these writings to the Messianic conceptions we have previously examined. As to the kingship claimed by Jesus, the Gospel is quite explicit. Not only is the triumphal entry into Jerusalem recorded, and described as the act of the coming King,[2] but the trial before Pilate brings out more clearly than any of the other accounts how needful the procurator felt it to be to inquire into the nature of this alleged kingship. The conversation among the people recorded in chapter vii. verses 40–4 reads like history 'taken in the very act.'[3] The writer assumes the knowledge which he and his readers possessed, that Jesus did really fulfil the prophecy of Micah which connected the Messiah with Bethlehem, and was the true Davidic King, but shows

[1] John xx. 31. [2] John xii. 12 f.
[3] Godet.

the ignorance of His opponents, whose argument against His claims was in reality an argument in His favour. At the same time the words of Jesus, 'My kingdom is not of this world,'[1] show that here, as elsewhere, the kingship is in essence spiritual.

A more difficult question is raised as to the use of the title, *Son of Man.* Schmiedel, indeed, asserts that in this gospel 'judgement' has a meaning not to be found in and inconsistent with the synoptists. It is not a future act, but a process accomplished in the present life. Dealing with passages such as chapter v. verses 25 ff., which quite clearly declare the other view, he can only suggest that they are glosses, or that old forms of expression have been maintained with new meaning imported into them. But, quite apart from the arbitrariness of such a course, we have the convincing evidence of the first epistle, that the judgement in the author's mind, as surely in ours, is both present and future at once. That epistle is written under the influence of the solemnizing thought that the last hour has sounded, that Christ may be manifested at any moment, and that those who have such a hope set before them must purify themselves even as He is pure.

> The Apostle . . . felt no contradiction between the thought of Christ's spiritual action upon mankind, with the gradual process of sifting effected thereby, and that of His eventual return in glory as the universal Judge

[1] John xviii. 36.

between this constant visiting and judging of the world and that ultimate 'manifestation' and supreme 'crisis' at the 'consummation of the age' which dominates the New Testament horizon generally.[1]

There is no need to dwell upon the further thought of the suffering *Servant*. It is this Gospel, as we have seen, which speaks of Jesus as the sin-bearing Lamb. That thought is worked out with marvellous richness in the epistle, where we read of the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and see how that has its source in the eternal love of God. Once more we find all these conceptions blended in that one Person, who 'became flesh and tabernacled amongst us.'

A few lines only can be added on the *Apocalypse*. Its writer frequently uses the human name Jesus; speaks of the twelve apostles (xxi. 14); mentions the crucifixion at Jerusalem (xi. 8), the resurrection (i. 5–18), the exaltation (iii. 21), and has many echoes of the spoken words of Jesus. He knows and applies to Him the Messianic prophecies, and knows that He came from Judah. He is 'the Root and Offspring of David,' 'the Lion of the tribe of Judah.' He manifests Himself to His servant in form 'like unto a Son of Man,' and is described in words which point back to the great passage in Daniel (i. 13 ff.). He is coming again with the clouds, and when that awful judgement seat is set, it is 'the throne of God and of the Lamb.'

[1] Findlay, ut supra, p. 234. The whole of this fine piece of exposition should be studied.

All the future will be the revelation of His glory. And yet the highest note that is sounded in the heavenly anthems unites the earthly humiliation and shame with the eternal glory. 'Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honour, and glory, and blessing.'[1] In that grand triumphant chorus all created things unite, whilst 'the worship that has been offered to Him that sits upon the throne, and that offered to the Lamb, flow together into one stream.'

If we wish to estimate the greatness of Jesus, we must ask again and again how it came to pass that men who held with passionate devotion the Jewish faith in monotheism, who had learnt to repeat daily from their childhood, 'Jehovah is our God, Jehovah is One,' could place Him on the throne side by side with God Himself. If we believe with them that all Hebrew history was the preparation for His coming, and that when the time came God surpassed all the highest dreams of seer and prophet by speaking to the world in His own eternal Son, then we can join in their worship. But any thought that falls short of this leaves their faith unexplained and their inmost experience a delusion.

[1] Rev. v. 12.

CHAPTER III

THE HOPE OF THE FUTURE

Christianity the culmination of an age-long purpose—Its achievements confirm this—Objections from the low state of Christian morality and experience, and from inability to meet the new calls at home and abroad—Answers: (*a*) The unlimited possibilities of Christian character. (*b*) Social evils can be remedied only by workers who are spiritually strong. (*c*) The Christian religion as revealed in history great enough for all demands—Need of a firm grasp of the meaning of history—Value of the Bible in giving this—Conclusion—The unwearied Christ—The hope of the final victory.

WE have now reached the goal that we set before us at the outset, and can look backwards over the ground that has been covered. If the arguments which have been considered are valid, it follows that the religion which we profess is not based upon uncertain reasonings that criticism can overthrow or new discoveries prove false. The claim of Christianity is that it is the culmination of an increasing purpose of God running through the ages. All through the centuries it shows God brooding over His children, bending down to meet them, and at last pouring out Himself in that immeasurable gift of Jesus. Hence it declares that that—

Deepest craving of the human heart—
That which drew Moses to the Mount of Fire,
That which shook David on his couch of tears,
That which upheld Dante to Paradise,
That which saved Byron through the depths of sin—
The unutterable thirst of man for God—

may be satisfied in Him who proclaims, 'If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink.' As we ponder the way in which Jesus fulfilled the prophecies we say—

It startles, it surprises us, it takes away our breath; it is utterly unlike what we should have expected; we could never have invented it. And yet the longer we look at it the more truly Godlike it appears. It is not what we thought God would be like if we could see Him, but it surpasses our inmost thought. *It is too supernatural not to be true.*[1]

When we look away from this wondrous story of love and atonement, and try to estimate what has sprung from it—the triumphs and achievements of the great Christian Society, the fragrance of the Christian character in its highest forms—our faith in the final victory is incalculably strengthened.

Yet it cannot be denied that there are many gravely disquieting signs in the life of to-day. The experience and character of the average Christian are in strange disproportion to the greatness of the truths he professes to believe. One of the most notable of recent books asserts that 'The striking contrast between the lives of

[1] Illingworth, *Reason and Revelation*, pp. 151-2. (Italics ours.)

Christians and the rules which they profess to accept is the great religious difficulty of the present day.'[1] Similarly it has been said that the indifferent layman does not believe in the reality of the Christian secret; that is to say, he rejects as a mere fantasy the claim that the Christian believer has a real and vivid experience of a personal God and Saviour in which he has no share. He does not see in the outward character and conduct of the Christian anything to suggest to him that such a claim has any real foundation. In itself this is not surprising, for spiritual vision alone can discern spiritual realities. But yet we remember that we follow One who compared His followers to the city on the hilltop with its walls flashing brightly in the sunshine, and know that there ought to be a self-evidencing power of goodness in His Church.

On the other hand, the magnitude of our social problems, so much vaster than any that Amos or Isaiah had to face, are leading many to turn impatiently from dogmatic religion and concentrate on humane and philanthropic effort.

Meanwhile great masses of our fellow-countrymen are alienated from all the Churches, whilst attendance at public worship is declining.

Yet at this very moment the great world outside presents opportunities for Christian enterprise never known before. The emergence of Japan as a first-rate power, the awakening of China, the unrest in

[1] Peile, *The Reproach of the Gospel*, p. 6.

India and Persia, the re-creation of Turkey, the new spirit in Russia, are imperative calls to the Church to advance all along the line and to claim for its Lord, in a fuller sense than ever, the empire of the world. It is not within our scope to discuss with any completeness problems such as these. But we desire to show the answers suggested by the history which we have surveyed.

(*a*) First, then, we can assert with confidence that if our claim as to God's age-long purpose is admitted as true, then there are no limits to the possibilities of Christian character. If God has done so much for humanity He will not fail us now. That is the great argument of the New Testament. 'He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?'[1] It was because he believed this that Paul could pray for his converts, humble and obscure in origin as many of them were, and with their past lives stained with many vices, that they might be 'filled unto all the fullness of God.'[2]

For the same reason, because he grasped so firmly the historical fact that the eternal Life of God had been manifested in time—'That which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled'[3]—John could not grant the admissibility of sin. Those who truly accept that revelation have a

[1] Rom. viii. 32. [2] Eph. iii. 19.
[3] 1 John i. 1.

power within them that makes selfishness and evil impossible; 'he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God.'[1]

Christian men and women need to drink in again and again the grandeur of these thoughts. We busy ourselves too much with details—the slow discouragement of our personal struggles to make ourselves better, the scanty harvests that reward our sowing—when we ought to be surrendering ourselves to the mighty energizing power of the Spirit of God, who is always working in our own hearts and in human nature everywhere. There are times when we must attend to details, patiently answering the objections of others and amending our own lives. But no one is fit to deal with details who has not first of all realized and yielded to the sweep and the glory of the Christian faith. The reverent study of the Old Testament will help us to do this more perfectly.

(*b*) In the second place, we must hold fast to the truth that social regeneration not less than personal conversion can only be wrought by spiritual forces. We cannot feel too deeply the urgency of the call to social service. In the recent Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and Relief of Distress there are abundant proofs how great the need is. The Commissioners say, in one of many striking passages—

'Land of Hope and Glory' is a popular and patriotic lyric sung each year with rapture by thousands of voices.

[1] 1 John iii. 9.

> . . . To certain classes of the community, into whose moral and material conditions it has been our duty to inquire, these words are a mockery and a falsehood. To many of them, possibly from their own failures and faults, there is in this life but little hope, and to many more 'glory' or its realization is an unknown ideal. Our investigations prove the existence in our midst of a class whose condition and environment are a discredit and a peril to the whole community. . . . No country, however rich, can permanently hold its own in the race of international competition if hampered by an increasing load of this dead weight; or can successfully perform the rôle of sovereignty beyond the seas if a portion of its own folk at home are sinking below the civilization and aspirations of its subject races abroad.[1]

Every Christian citizen feels the burden and the shame of such words as these.

But we repeat that the solution of such problems will not be found by those who turn away from the doctrines of Christianity, but by those who understand most perfectly what the Christian religion means. Micah declared long since, 'I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgement, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and unto Israel his sin.'[2] We want men inspired by the same Spirit to do such work to-day. Whilst it is good to feel the noble zeal for civic righteousness that made the prophets such fearless preachers of the rights of the oppressed and the helpless, we must never forget that it was their faith in a kingdom which God Himself was pledged to establish

[1] *Report*, p. 644, § 173.

[2] Micah iii. 8.

that sustained them through their darkest hours of disappointment and of sorrow. Only those who are 'very sure of God,' and whose faith rests on the conviction that history is full of His working, will be able to work without discouragement and with the certainty of ultimate triumph.

> And oh! when Nature sinks, as oft she may,
> Through long-lived pressure of obscure distress,
> Still to be strenuous for the bright reward,
> And in the soul admit of no decay,
> Brook no continuance of weak-mindedness—
> Great is the glory, for the strife is hard.[1]

The knowledge that God Himself is working in this strife, and the tracing out of His presence through all the centuries, bring the secret of persistence and the pledge of victory.

(*c*) The same thoughts must guide us when we face the unchurched multitudes at home or the non-Christian populations abroad. The real question that confronts us is whether we have sufficient stores of spiritual energy to give freely to others, and so to bring in Christ's kingdom in our own generation. As we saw at the outset, the wealth of new knowledge has compelled the restatement of some of the grounds of our faith. Our methods of attack and motives for appeal are, in some important respects, differently conceived and expressed. But we have seen that the Witness of Israel, its 'half-enlightened, often-chequered trust,' was

[1] Wordsworth, Sonnet to R. B. Haydon.

borne to a great reality, and ended in the revelation of Jesus Christ the Son of God. Hence the fair prophetic vision of all the nations paying their glad homage to the universal Father is still able to attract and to hold us. What we need is that the littleness of our own narrow views should be lost as we make our own this great world-embracing purpose. The magnificent success of the World's Student Christian Federation is a cheering sign that this grand conception of Christian duty and possibility is capturing the youth of our own day. But if this fair promise is to be realized, and Christ is to be enthroned amongst all peoples, we must hold fast to the truth that He is worthy to be the universal King, because in Him, as Paul declared, all things were summed up. Apart from this, no ethical teaching, however lofty, will avail. Nor can psychology, however ably it vindicates the rights of the religious consciousness, give to our sinful world a saving gospel. It is good to find God in the conscience, and to hear in the depths of our nature the proclamation of His eternal law of righteousness. But the world craves One who has manifested Himself all through the history of the past, and is still ordering and controlling the movements of the nations. Such a God is revealed to us in the Bible. Even though at times we cannot trace His working, and have to say still, 'Thy way is in the sea, and Thy paths in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known,' we can yet be sure that He has not left the world to itself. It is,

perhaps, true that we need this reminder to-day more than ever before. The thought that it is possible to find a faith which is independent of history is attractive enough in its way, and seems to offer an escape from many perplexities. It is also true that much of what our fathers thought to be foundations has now been shown to be scaffolding only. The great building of God reveals its strength and beauty far more plainly now that this has been removed. But when all this has been admitted, we must still hold fast the conviction that history culminated in Jesus Christ, and that in God manifest in the flesh the innermost secret of the divine working was disclosed. To steep ourselves in the Old Testament is one of the surest ways of securing the invincible certainty that this is true. Only so can we look forward to the future without fear.

The battle is not yet won. Stern trials may still await the followers of Jesus, testings of faith, anxious questionings, apparent failures. Yet we know that He who so long ago began the task of winning mankind for Himself is not now 'as a man astonied; as a mighty man that cannot save.'[1] The God whom Jeremiah in that wonderful passage calls 'the Hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in the time of trouble,' is not 'as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night,' i.e. a mere passing visitor or traveller. The Bible history shows His constant presence with His people, so that 'in all their affliction He was

[1] Jer. xiv. 9.

afflicted.' He cannot fail nor be discouraged till He has set judgement in the earth. It is because the Bible assures us of this that it is still to us the Book of books, standing alone in its grandeur and its living witness. Most of all are we assured of this when we ponder the story of Jesus. He counted the cost when He emptied Himself and took on Himself the form of a servant, and did not come amongst us to be defeated. There is a noble passage in Mr. Shorthouse's *John Inglesant* which describes a vision of the Christ—

He came down the steps . . . and He came to me. He was not at all like the pictures of the saints; for He was pale, and worn, and thin, as though the fight was not yet half over—ah no!—but through this pale and worn look shone infinite power, and undying love, and unquenchable resolve. . . . As He spoke, a shudder and a trembling ran through the crowd, as if stirred by the breath of His voice. Nature seemed to rally and to grow beneath Him, and heaven to bend down to touch the earth. A healing sense of help and comfort, like the gentle dew, visited the weary heart. A great cry and shout rose from the crowd, and He passed on; but among ten thousand times ten thousand I should know Him, and amid the tumult of a universe I should hear the faintest whisper of His voice.[1]

That voice may still be heard, from the pages of the Bible, and in the secret place of man's conscience and heart. Those who listen to it move forward undismayed, and look towards the time when—

[1] Chap. xxxv.

Earth breaks up, time drops away,
In flows heaven, with its new day
Of endless life, when He who trod,
Very man and very God,
This earth in weakness, shame, and pain,
Dying the death whose signs remain
Up yonder on the accursed tree—
Shall come again, no more to be
Of captivity the thrall,
But the one God, All in all,
King of kings, Lord of lords,
As His servant John received the words,
'I died, and live for evermore.'

And one of the elders said unto me, Weep not; behold the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath overcome.

And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, *a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain.*

And every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them, heard I saying, Unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever.

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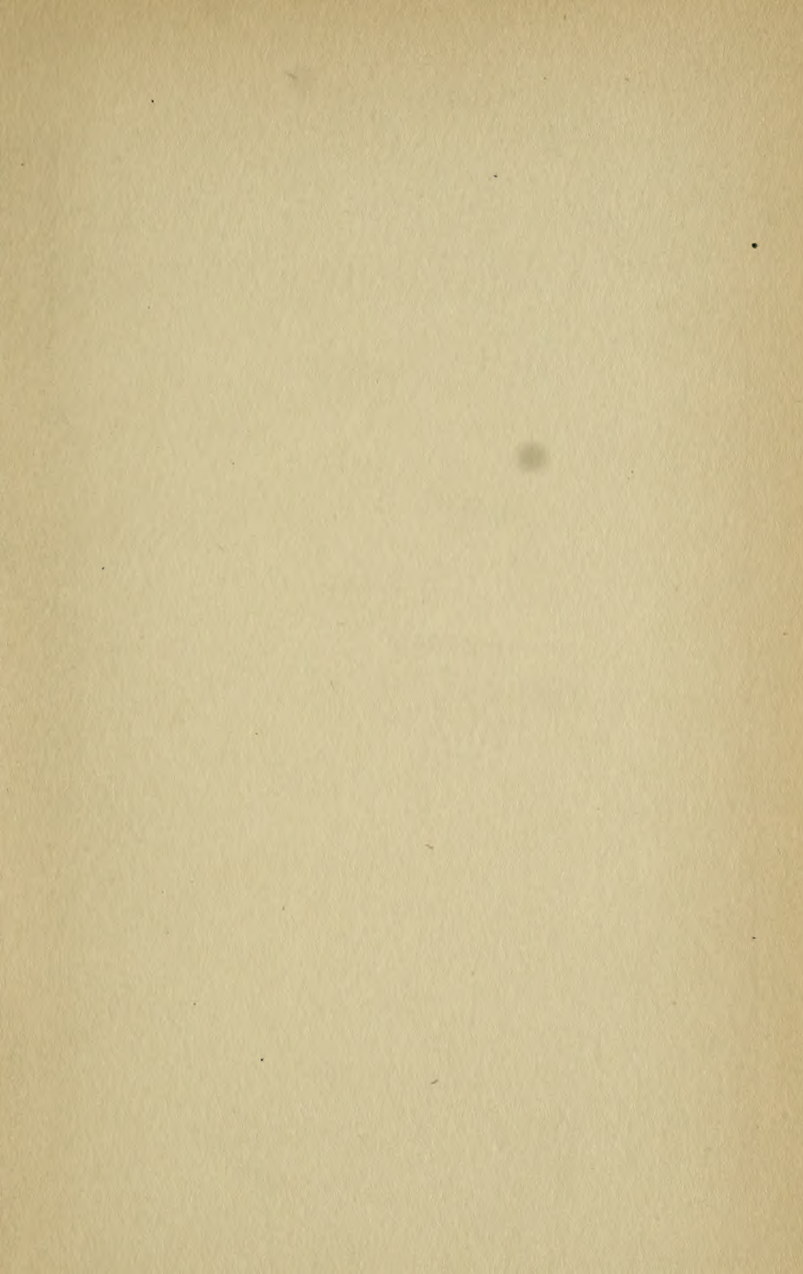
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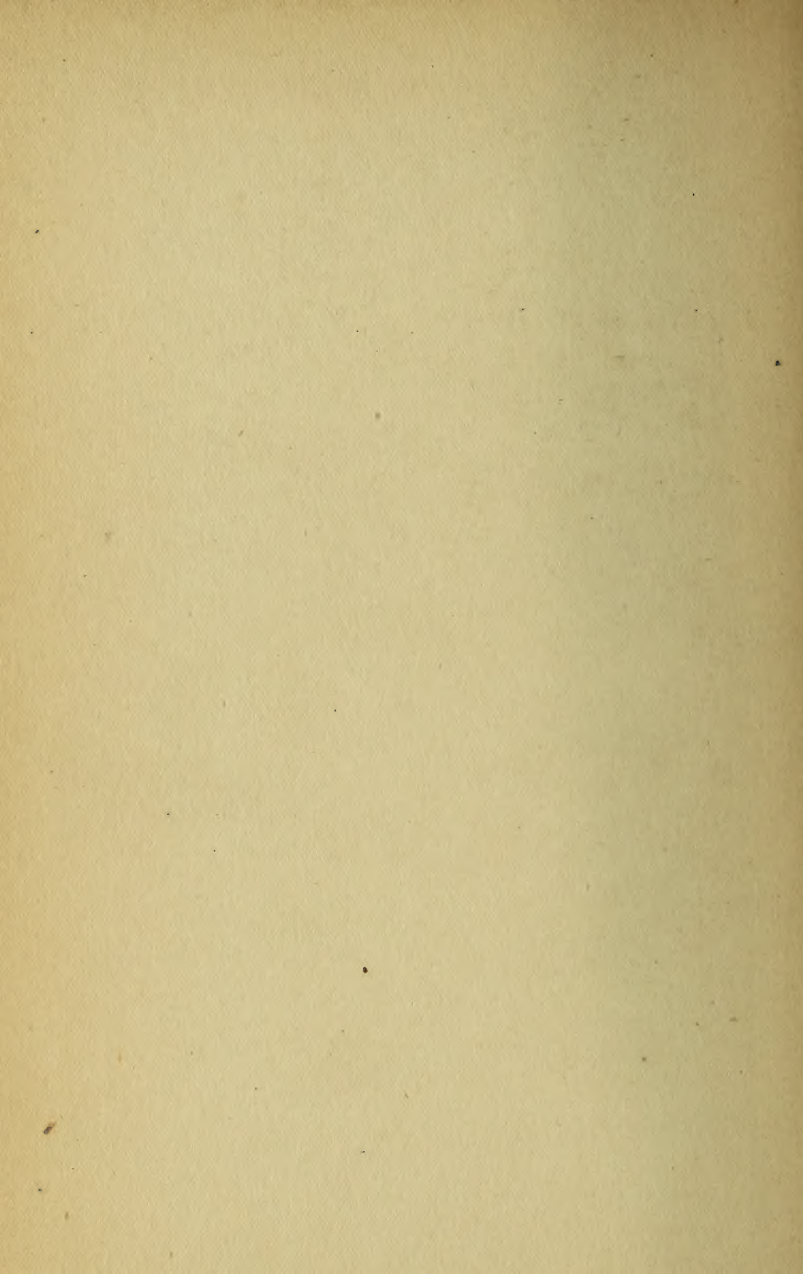
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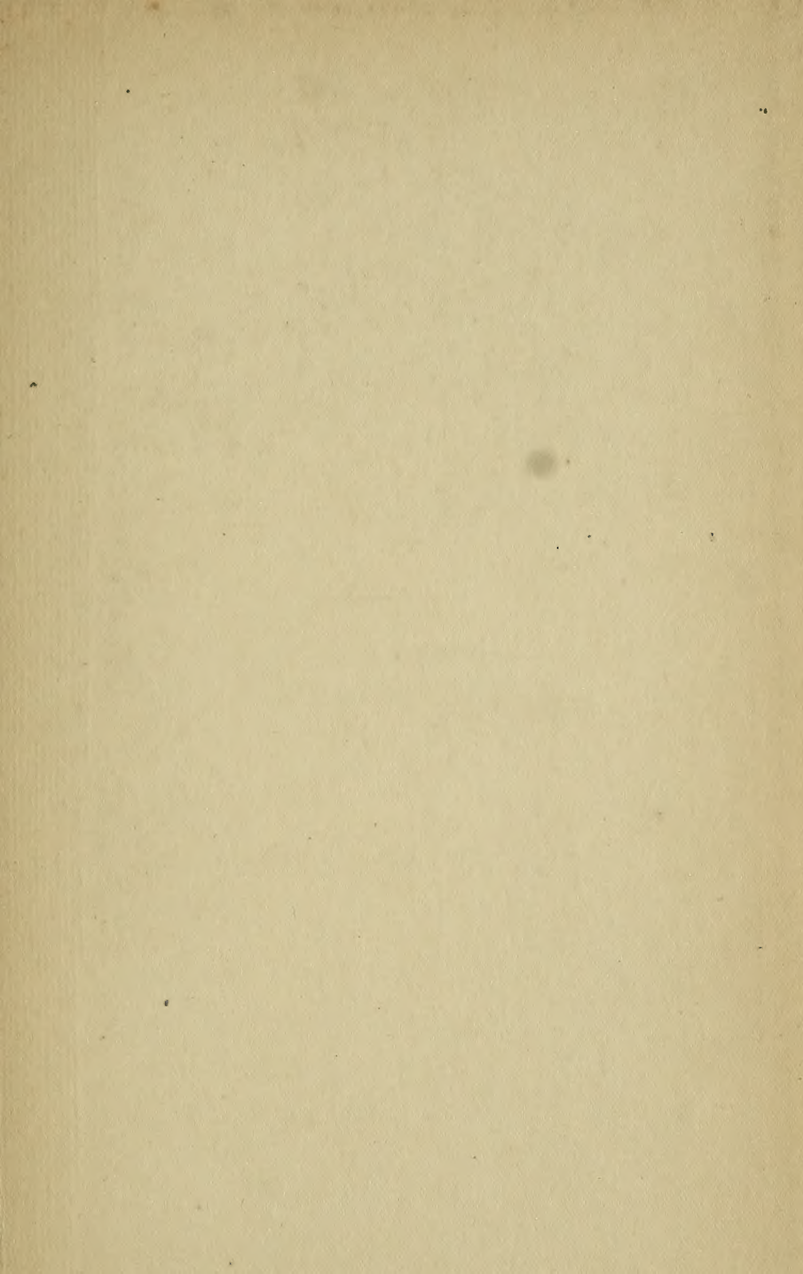
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